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GAMEFAN

NEXT GENERATION VIDEO GAME MAGAZINE

VOLUME 4 • ISSUE 4

GUARDIAN HEROES
SEGA'S TREASURE

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SF ALPHA 2 • ALIEN TRILOGY • PANZER DRAGOON ZWEI
NIGHT WARRIORS • LOBO • MARIO RPG • HOLLYWOOD SPOT

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Sir George (Cheech)–Referred to in English Lit. as The Protagonist. Greedy SOB. Steer clear. Unless, of course, you're driving a Mack truck.

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The pursuit of the crown in the King's Tournament will have you seeing stars all right. Blazing Dragons™—a warped medieval adventure boasting a freakish mix of voice-over talents like Cheech Marin, Harry Shearer and Jessica Hahn—spills from the twisted mind of Monty Python Troupe member Terry Jones. And between the wicked, kitty-hurling villains and brain-liquifying puzzles, your grip on reality (not to mention self-respect) will be seriously tested.

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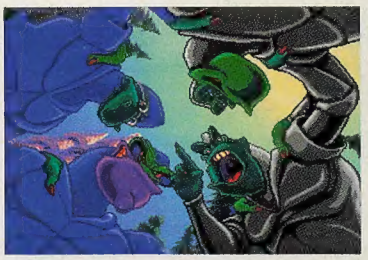

Over 50 scenes with Monty Python-esque sequences/sub-plots. Collect objects to engineer your way into the Princess'...um, heart.

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THE SHOCKING SEQUEL THAT HAS EVERYBODY TALKING!

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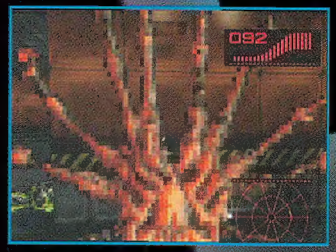

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COVER STORY

It has no FMV, it's not rendered, and it's not 3-D. We couldn't be happier. A treasure indeed!

GAMEFAN original art by:

TERRY WOLFINGER

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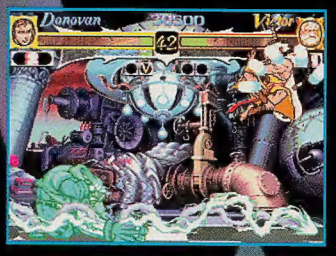

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ON SEPTEMBER 30th, DINOSAURS WILL FLY!

Because on that day, the home entertainment world starts spinning at 64 bits — faster than any video game system or personal computer ever made. Live your dream: Nintendo 64 and its revolutionary 3-D controller will send you as far into the game as you dare to go. Over the top. Out on the edge. Choose your hero: *James Bond, Ken Griffey, Jr., Super Mario.* Or even *Darth Vader.* You'll find them on games exclusive to Nintendo 64. Players will rock. Competitors will weep.

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Only if you want the best!

NINTENDO 64

Nintendo

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SPECIAL THANKS TO:
KEVIN H., MOLLY S., JENNIFER, SCOTT M., KITTY, RALPH, TERRY, AND ALL OF OUR READERS!

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ABC AUDIT & MEMBERSHIP APPLIED FOR: NOVEMBER, 1994
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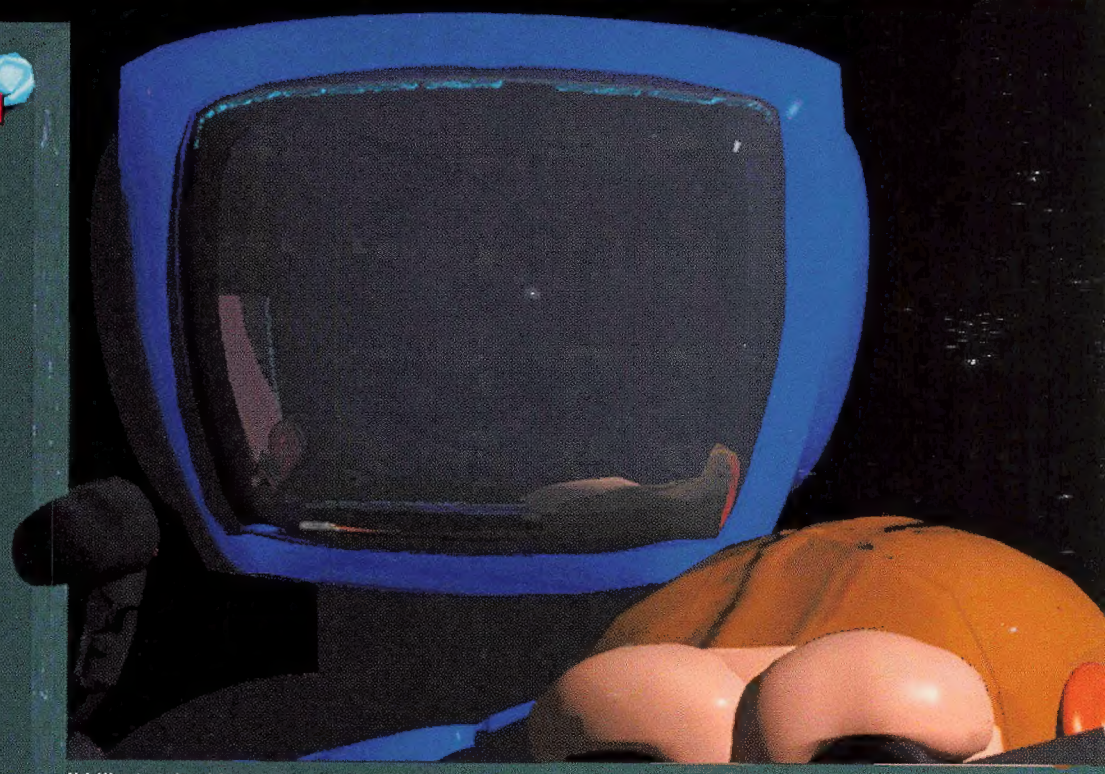

I'd like to take this opportunity to answer the loyal Atari supporters who've been writing us in regards to our less than vast Jag coverage of late. It's true, we came out of the gate smokin', offering Atari a dedicated section and ample editorial support. Early on things looked great. Our Atari rep, Bob Brodie, took great care of us and had a general concern and love for Atari and the games they produce. But when Bob left Atari to spend more time at home, we were left with non-gamer types with little concern for our efforts and a general lack of interest in keeping us abreast. We were open-minded and excited when Atari announced it's re-emergence into the gaming world, and hoped that Atari would attract some high profile third parties with the licenses it takes to become a force in gaming. It looked good for a while, but as was the case many years ago, one thing stood in Atari's way... Atari. The reality of the Saturn and PS spawned a too-little-too-late CD with no support and then, when the Saturn and PS showed up on the scene, just about every developer worth his weight in foam rubber dove at the chance to program for the big boys. Jag development was put on the back burner, and just like that, the curtain fell. There were massive lay-offs at Atari this week, and, although nothing is official, it seems all but over. While Atari Interactive will begin PC development, the Jag sadly seems but a memory. If you can lay your hands on a Jag CD and copy of *Battlemorph* you'll not only have a nice game but one heck of a collectors item.

The game industry isn't always a pretty place, and even the best-laid plans often fail. Case(s) in point, Sega's VR headset and 32X, Nintendo's Phillips and Sony CD systems, and NEC's Super CD. I do miss NEC. The Virtual Boy isn't lighting any fires either but I believe it will find its audience granted we find a way to cover it, which we are currently working with Nintendo to do.

Back in Volume 2, Issue 5, I wrote about this very thing. Too many consoles, too few developers. Good systems that, under normal circumstances, would have had a shot, have indeed gone by the wayside.

My prediction for the future? The Nintendo64, Sony PlayStation, Sega Saturn, and Matsushita M2 will reign, leaving no room for competition, and ultimately upgrade again as early as '98, but hopefully not before '99/2000. Wow, 2000. Imagine getting used to writing that on your checks.

P.S. 16-bit's still not dead.

Save The Soul of Rock and Roll!

JOHNNY bazookatone

Includes title track featuring Richie Sambora and Tico Torres from Bon Jovi!

You're the hottest thing in Rock'n Roll, and somebody just stole your favorite guitar. It was the devilish Mr. Diablo - resident hard-case in Hades, and he's not about to give it up. He wants to play hard-ball? That's just fine with you. Grab your heavy metal gear and amp-up to raze the dead with the meanest, coolest tunes ever composed for a video game! Let the hordes of the Abyss know that they took on the wrong Rock 'n Roller!

check out Johnny's website! http://www.anime.net/~johnnyb

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KIDS TO ADULTS
AGES 6+

Available on:

PC CD-ROM · PlayStation · 3DO

TOP TEN MOST WANTED

READERS' TOP TEN

1. *Virtua Fighter 2* - Saturn
2. *Diddy's Kong Quest* - SNES
3. *Chrono Trigger* - SNES
4. *Doom* - PS
5. *Killer Instinct* - SNES
6. *Sega Rally* - Saturn
7. *Loaded* - PS
8. *Yoshi's Island* - SNES
9. *Street Fighter Alpha* - Arcade
10. *Warhawk* - PS

READERS' MOST WANTED

1. *Killer Instinct II* - U64
2. *Super Mario*^{64} - U64
3. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
4. *Final Fantasy VII*
5. *Resident Evil* - PS
6. *Tekken 2* - PS
7. *Zelda*^{64} - U64
8. *Mario Kart*^{64} - U64
9. *Toshinden 2* - PS
10. *Panzer Dragoon 2* - Saturn

DEVELOPERS' TOP TEN

This Month's Guest Developer

George Weising

Player One

1. *Assault Rigs* - PS
2. *SF Alpha* - PS
3. *Toy Story* - Genesis
4. *Wipeout* - PS
5. *Yoshi's Island* - SNES
6. *Vector Man* - Genesis
7. *Destruction Derby* - PS
8. *Virtua Fighter 2* - Saturn
9. *In the Hunt* - PS
10. *Jumping Flash* - PS

GF EDITORS' TOP TEN

1. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
2. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
3. *Night Warriors* - Saturn
4. *Hollywood Spot* - PS
5. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES

6. *Assault Rigs* - PS
7. *RayEarth* - Saturn
8. *Floating Runner* - PS
9. *Genso Suikoden* - PS
10. *Dark Savior* - Saturn

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
3. *SF Alpha* - PS
4. *Policenauts* - PS
5. *Night Warriors* - Saturn

6. *Y's Book 1 & 2* - TG16
7. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
8. *Doom* - PS
9. *Tekken 2* - Arcade
10. *Crystalis* - NES

1. *Killer Instinct 2* - Arcade
2. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
3. *SF Alpha* - PS/Saturn
4. *Doom* - PS
5. *Assault Rigs* - PS

6. *Resident Evil* - PS
7. *Darius Gaiden* - Saturn
8. *Diddy's Kong Quest* - SNES
9. *Tekken 2* - Arcade
10. *Soul Edge* - Arcade

1. *Genso Suikoden* - PS
2. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
3. *Resident Evil* - PS
4. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
5. *Night Warriors* - Saturn

6. *Policenauts* - PS
7. *Samurai Shodown 3* - Neo Geo
8. *Devil Summoner* - Saturn
9. *Darius Gaiden* - Saturn
10. *Alien Trilogy* - PS

1. *Super Mario*^{64} - U64
2. *Killer Instinct 2* - Arcade
3. *SF Alpha* - PS
4. *Sega Rally* - Saturn
5. *Soul Edge* - Arcade

6. *Super Mario RPG* - SNES
7. *Doom* - PS
8. *Ridge Racer Revolution* - PS
9. *Diddy's Kong Quest* - SNES
10. *Alien Trilogy* - PS

1. *Resident Evil* - PS
2. *Policenauts* - PS
3. *Panzer Dragoon Zwei* - Saturn
4. *Guardian Heroes* - Saturn
5. *Tales of Phantasia* - SF

6. *Ridge Racer Revolution* - PS
7. *Samurai Shodown 3* - Neo Geo
8. *SF Alpha* - PS
9. *Diddy's Kong Quest* - SNES
10. *Snatcher* - PS

WIN THE GAME SYSTEM OF YOUR CHOICE! ENTER TODAY!

All you have to do to enter the drawing is write down a list of your top 10 favorite games and the 10 games you want the most that aren't out yet, on a piece of paper or a postcard then send them to: GAMEFAN TOP TEN, 5137 Clareton Dr., Suite 210 Agoura Hills, CA 91301

First Prize:
Your choice of a 32X, VIRTUAL BOY, or NOMAD.

Second Prize:
Your choice of one of the Picks of the Month in Viewpoint.

Third Prize:
A FREE year of GameFan! The best magazine in the universe!

Drawing is limited to One (1) entry per person per month. Drawings will be held on the 21st of each month. The three (3) winners will be notified by mail and listed on this page. For a complete list of rules and regulations write: GameFan Top Ten with self addressed & stamped envelope.

Congratulations

to last month's winners:

First Prize:
Jim Pennington, Elgin, IL

Second Prize:
Sang Kwon, Torrance, CA

Third Prize:
Joel Ruidera, Glendale, CA

FINAL FANTASY VII

2 CD's for the PlayStation!

I think it's pretty safe to say that Square loves you. They were brave enough to develop *Final Fantasy VII* (*Final Fantasy IV* in the States) on a platform with the only storage medium they felt would do their trademark series justice... CD-ROM... or should I say *two* CD-ROM's. Originally planned for the Nintendo64 (In all truth, it probably *wasn't*... look how far along this game obviously is), Square probably made the decision to go with Sony when Nintendo decided upon the cartridge format. There was no vendetta against Nintendo; Square made a creative business decision: *FFVII* will cost 5,800 Yen ($58) when it's released in December, *FFVI* cost 11,400 Yen ($114) a year ago. Nothing has been released as far as storyline, other than that the focal point of the game is the city of Midgar (upper right corner) and three of the many main characters: Claud, Ealis and Bullet. I'll be bringing you many, many updates on this game in the future... for now, we can but gaze upon this polygonal glory.

- Nick Rox

Ealis

Bullet

Claud

HOCUS POCUS

Travel With Thy Controller In Hand To A Land Where Cheaters Prosper...

Super Hocus Pocus Scroll

First Prize! Receive a free video game* of your choice, A GameFan t-shirt and a 12-month subscription to GameFan Magazine

Second Prize! Win a GameFan T-Shirt, and a one-year subscription to GameFan Magazine.

Third Prize! Win a GameFan T-Shirt

Send in your codes... good, bad, or ugly. We'll look em' over and choose one grand prize winner each month. Codes cannot come from a previously published US magazine. Winners will be drawn each month and displayed here in Hocus Pocus, the only place where cheaters prosper. (Current subscribers who win a sub. will receive a one-year extension.)

* Any video game featured in our "Viewpoint" section

CONGRATULATIONS!

To this month's winners:

First Prize:

Tom Szakolczay, Henderson, NV

Second Prize:

Joe Kelly, Winchester, VA

Third Prize:

Jeremy Greenfield, Cape Coral, FL

SEND YOUR CARDS AND LETTERS TO:

Hocus Pocus
5137 Clareton Dr. Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

Ridge Racer Revolution (Sony PlayStation) Super Deformer Racing Cars!

Play a perfect game of Galaga '88 without wasting a single bullet. You must get a perfect 40.

Now when you enter the car select screen, there will be an extra eight cars to choose from!

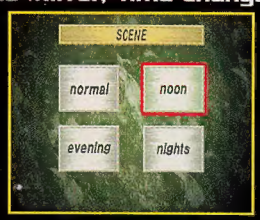
Start a normal game and presto, Super Deformer Card.

Ridge Racer Revolution (Sony PlayStation) Extended View, No Mirror, Time Change

To race without the rear view mirror, first pause the game in driver's view, then hit TRI and L1 at the same time.

To race with an extended view, first pause the game behind the car, then hit TRI and R1 at the same time.

To change the time settings in the races, you must first beat the expert class.



Then select "OTHERS." Now you can race all day...

Toshinden 2 (Sony PlayStation) Play Without Life And Overdrive Meters

During a match, pause the game.

Now press and hold CIR, TRI,SQU, X, and hit "SELECT" twice.

Now you can play the game without life and overdrive meters!

Virtua Cop (Sega Saturn) Gun Select

During this SEGA logo, enter the following command:
Hold C, then press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT

Then at this title screen, hold C, then press DOWN, UP, RIGHT, LEFT, UP, UP, LEFT, RIGHT. Now go to the OPTION PLUS menu, and turn gun select "ON."

Pause the game and reload your gun. Now you can use the machine gun and many other weapons! Up to 7 different weapons!

Virtua Cop (Sega Saturn) Mirror Mode, Ranking Mode

During the STAGE SELECT screen enter: SHOT, RELOAD, SHOT, SHOT, SHOT, RELOAD, RELOAD, SHOT

Now you can play *Virtua Cop* in Mirror Mode!

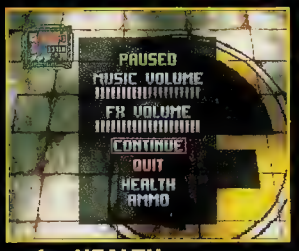
During this SEGA logo enter: Hold C, and press UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT

Now you can play the ranking mode to see how good you really are!

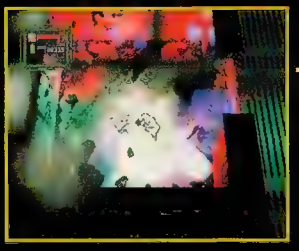
Loaded (Sony PlayStation) — Ammo and Health

Pause the game to reveal the Sub-Option Menu. Hold L1 and L2 for 10 seconds...

...for AMMO: press DOWN,RIGHT,CIR,LEFT, RIGHT,CIR or...



...for HEALTH: press RIGHT, RIGHT, LEFT, DOWN, DOWN, TRI, CIR



Now you can really blast them to pieces!

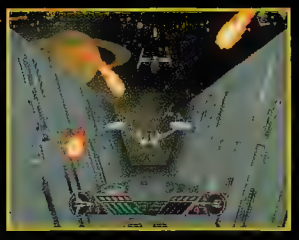
1st Place
Tom Szakolczay
Henderson, Nevada

Solar Eclipse (Sega Saturn) — Various Codes

Start a game, then Pause. Make sure to input: RIGHT, DOWN, DOWN, LEFT before entering the following codes:

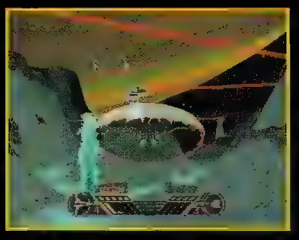
"PRODUCTION LEVEL"
C,RIGHT,A,Z,Y
(C-R-A-Z-Y)

"CLOAKING"
DOWN, RIGHT, A, C, UP, LEFT, A



"STAR WARS TRENCH"
RIGHT, RIGHT, DOWN, DOWN (R2D2)

"FADE TO BLACK"
X, Y, Z, Z, Y



"INVINCIBILITY"
B, UP, LEFT, LEFT, Y
(you figure the rest out)

"FULL WEAPON AND SHIELDS"
A, LEFT, LEFT

2nd Place
Joe Kelly
Winchester, Virginia

"HOUSE HUNT"
Y, A, RIGHT, DOWN

"9 LIVES"
B, UP, DOWN, DOWN,

Diddy's Kong Quest (Super Nintendo) — Music Test, Cheat Mode

Start a new game. Go to the "2 PLAYER CONTEST" mode and press down 5 times.

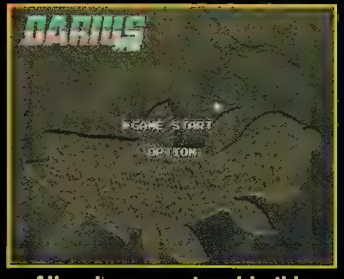
From the "MUSIC TEST," press down 5 times to enable "CHEAT MODE."

While in "CHEAT MODE," enter: Y, A, SELECT, A, DOWN, LEFT, A, DOWN. You will hear a chime and a monkey giggle if done correctly.

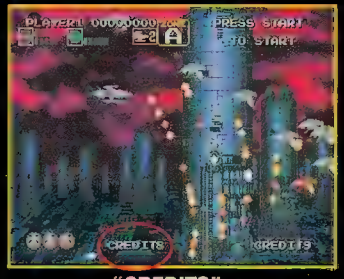
3rd Place
Jeremy Greenfield
Cape Coral, Florida

THE PEOPLE ABOVE ARE THIS MONTH'S WINNERS!
CONGRATULATIONS! AND KEEP SENDING THOSE TRICKS IN!
YOU JUST MIGHT WIN A SPOT IN GAMEFAN'S SUPER HOCUS POCUS SPREAD!

Darius Gaiden (Sega Saturn) — Abnormal Level, Extra Credits, Rapid Fire

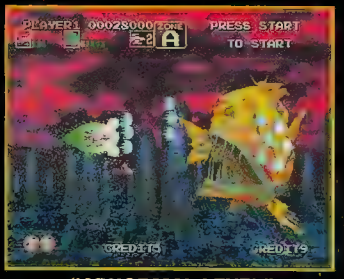


All codes are entered in this menu screen.



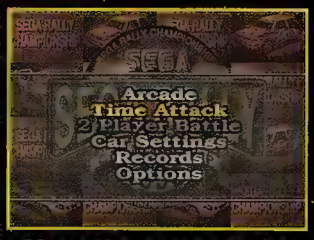
"CREDITS"
X, A, LEFT SHIFT,RIGHT SHIFT, then, while holding LEFT SHIFT, press X, C, Z, A

"RAPID FIRE"
While holding X, press Z, C, LEFT SHIFT, B, LEFT, RIGHT SHIFT, LEFT SHIFT



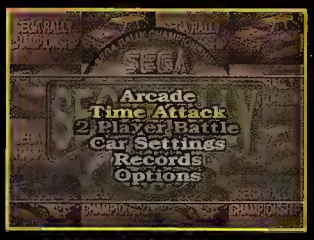
"ABNORMAL LEVEL"
While holding X, press Z, C, LEFT SHIFT, B, LEFT, RIGHT SHIFT, LEFT SHIFT

Sega Rally (Sega Saturn) — Use the Lanca Stratos, Lake Side Track



Move the cursor in the title screen to TIME ATTACK.

Then press X, Y, Z, Y, X. Now you should see the Lancia Stratos car.



At the Title Screen, move the cursor to TIME ATTACK, and press X and Y at the same time.

You should see another track called "LAKE SIDE."

Yohan Yoon
Boston, MA

Brian K. Ritchie
Leviltown, PA

Street Fighter Alpha (Sony PlayStation) — Use Akuma, Dan, and M. Bison, Team Mode

Go to the "?" during Arcade, Versus, or Training mode. Press and hold L2, and then...

...for "AKUMA," press BACK 3X, DOWN 3X, and press either SQU & TRI, or X and CIR, or...

...for "BISON," press BACK 2X, DOWN 2X, BACK, DOWN 2X, then press SQU and TRI, or X and CIR, or...

... for "DAN," press TRI, SQU, X, CIR, TRI or TRI, CIR, X, SQU, TRI

"TEAM MODE" Beat the game on LEVEL 5 or higher, and this option should appear in the BATTLE SELECT screen.

DOOM - PS (CHEAT MODES)

Done while game is PAUSED

God Mode: DOWN, L2, SQU, R1, RIGHT, L1, LEFT, CIR.

Lots of Goodies: X, TRI, L1, UP, DOWN, R2, LEFT, LEFT.

Map Cheat: TRI, TRI, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, CIR.

Auto Map: TRI, TRI, L2, R2, L2, R2, R1, SQU.

Transparent Walls: L1, R2, L2, R1, RIGHT, TRI, X, RIGHT.

Level Warp: RIGHT, LEFT, R2, R1, TRI, L1, CIR, X.

Kvin Kurpinsky
Westland, MI

ASSAULT RIGS - PS (CODES FOR EVERY LEVEL!)

1.) CIR, CIR, CIR, CIR, CIR, CIR
2.) SQU, X, SQU, X, TRI, SQU
3.) TRI, SQU, SQU, CIR, CIR, TRI
4.) TRI, SQU, TRI, TRI, CIR, TRI
5.) SQU, TRI, TRI, TRI, X, TRI
6.) TRI, SQU, CIR, CIR, X, SQU
7.) X, SQU, SQU, SQU, CIR, TRI
8.) TRI, SQU, X, SQU, TRI, TRI
9.) SQU, TRI, SQU, X, TRI, X
10.) TRI, TRI, CIR, SQU, X, SQU
11.) TRI, TRI, X, TRI, CIR, SQU
12.) CIR, SQU, TRI, TRI, TRI, CIR
13.) TRI, SQU, CIR, X, TRI, SQU
14.) TRI, TRI, X, SQU, SQU, X
15.) CIR, X, TRI, TRI, TRI, TRI
16.) CIR, SQU, CIR, CIR, CIR, SQU
17.) TRI, TRI, TRI, CIR, TRI, SQU
18.) SQU, CIR, SQU, X, SQU, TRI
19.) X. X. SQU, X, SQU, TRI
20.) X, SQU, X, TRI, TRI, SQU
21.) TRI, SQU, TRI, SQU, TRI, TRI
22.) SQU, SQU, TRI, CIR, SQU, TRI
23.) CIR, X, X, X, X, TRI
24.) TRI, SQU, SQU, TRI, TRI, TRI
25.) TRI, CIR, TRI, TRI, CIR, SQU
26.) SQU, CIR, CIR, X, CIR, X
27.) X, CIR, SQU, TRI, TRI, SQU
28.) SQU, CIR, SQU, SQU, SQU, SQU
29.) TRI, SQU, CIR, X, CIR, CIR
30.) SQU, CIR, X, CIR, X, TRI
31.) CIR, SQU, X, TRI, CIR, TRI
32.) TRI, SQU, X, CIR, SQU, X
33.) X, X, TRI, X, X, SQU
34.) X, CIR, SQU, CIR, CIR, SQU
35.) CIR, TRI, X, TRI, X, TRI
36.) X, TRI, TRI, X, X, SQU
37.) X, TRI, TRI, X, TRI, SQU
38.) SQU, TRI, SQU, TRI, SQU, X,
39.) SQU, X, TRI, X, X, TRI
40.) TRI, X, TRI, CIR, SQU, X
41.) CIR, X, TRI, CIR, TRI, SQU

MORTAL KOMBAT 3 - PS (KOMBAT CODES)

Slowly recover energy
975310
Super endurance
024689
No specials & energy recover
040404
Disable combos
722722
Hyper run jumps
321789
No special moves
555556
First player do 1/2 damage
390000
Second player do 1/2 damage
000390
Both players do 1/2 damage
390390

Joshua Levy
San Antonio, TX

GEX - PS (VARIOUS CODES)

First PAUSE the game and then press and hold R1, then press the following:

Infinite Lives - UP, CIR, TRI, DOWN, RIGHT, SQU, DOWN
Invincibility - X, SQU, DOWN, DOWN, UP, DOWN, RIGHT
Electricity - RIGHT, LEFT, RIGHT, CIR, TRI, RIGHT, CIR, DOWN, RIGHT
Speed - DOWN, START, RIGHT, RIGHT, DOWN, UP, START
Ice - CIR, CIR, LEFT, DOWN, CIR, UP, RIGHT
Fire - X, UP, RIGHT, UP, RIGHT, RIGHT
Super Jump - X, CIR, UP, UP, DOWN, RIGHT, RIGHT

Bryan Worrell
Woodbridge, VA

BATMAN FOREVER - SEGA GENESIS (LEVEL SELECT, OTHER OPTIONS)

At the Batman Forever title screen, press LEFT, UP, LEFT, LEFT, A THEN B.

Averey J. Brown
N. Charleston, SC

They say the last thing you see before you die
is a blinding flash of light.

But Hey, You're A Mercenary. You're Used To This Stuff.

You've joined Da Wardenz. Big-time, highly trained armed forces specialists saving the world from injustice, corruption and global terrorism with the help of one very bad boy: a fully armored, sophisticated M-13 Predator Battletank. Sure, war is hell. But at least you're kickin' to the awesome hip-hop soundtrack of San Francisco 49er football star and rapper William "Bar None" Floyd.

SHELLSHOCK

Command the deadly M-13 Predator Battletank across 3D mapped and textured terrains in real-time, first-person.

25 covert, explosive missions in the most politically volatile regions in the world!

2 player head-to-head play or multiplay network in the PC version—up to 8 players wage war.

Available on:

US GOLD

Designed and Developed by CORE STUDIOS

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KIDS TO ADULTS
AGES 6+
AOL @keyword: NOA
www.nintendo.com

Super Mario World 2®

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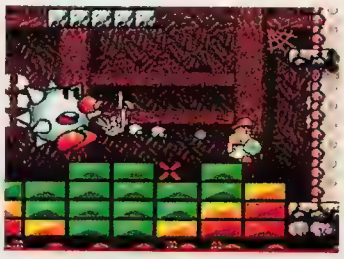
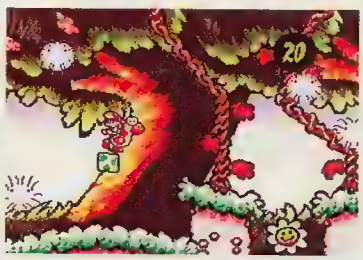
Mario's back in his biggest adventure yet.

Four years in the birthing, and now this bambino comes kicking and screaming into the world of Morphmation graphics. A Nintendo brainchild that allows the characters and backgrounds to ripple, rubberize and react like nothing you've ever seen ('cept maybe that nasty gelatin salad your mom puts out for company).

But there's more than eye-popping visuals to drool over. There's over



Egg fights, screaming babies, vicious attacks—it's like day care from hell.

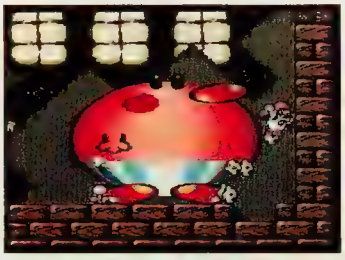


Do not adjust your television. These graphics are supposed to be wavy.

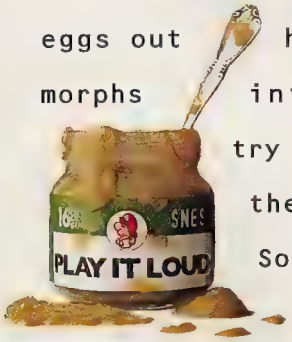
This baby's outta control.

60 levels packed with all-new surprises. Huge expanding bosses. And Yoshi — a cold-blooded baby sitter who spits fire and launches eggs out his butt. He even morphs into a helicopter... try that with your average lizard. And if that doesn't pacify you, there are over 130 different types of enemies. So, you may wanna put on a fresh diaper.

This little sucker doesn't just scroll left to right. He goes all over the place (and we don't mean Number Two).



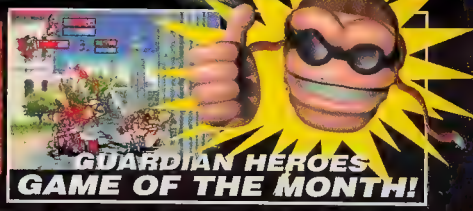
Kicking, shrieking, crying, tantrums...and that's just the guys who bought new systems.



Only for SUPER NINTENDO

VIEWPOINT

Legend
Graphics
Control
Play mechanics
Music
Originality



ALIEN TRILOGY
PLAYSTATION
ACCLAIM • CD
3-D ADVENTURE

Alien Trilogy has something that no other corridor game has... aliens. I'm a die-hard sci-fi fan, and Giger's aliens are some of the most foreboding beasts in all of cinema. To say the least, they populate this beautifully texture mapped, ultra smooth 3-D adventure with all of the threatening presence they exude on-screen. The sound of the motion tracker, symphonic tunes, light sourcing, and 3-D graphics far beyond *Doom* make *Alien Trilogy* my 1st choice in the 3-D corridor category. This is Probe's finest game. Pixelly face huggers... who cares?

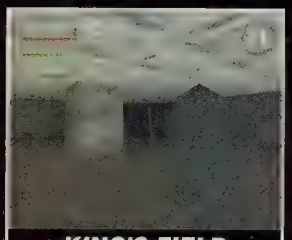
G 9 C 9 P 8 M 9 O 7 **95**

Alien Trilogy has great music, cool intermissions, flawless scaling and excellent lighting effects, but suffers a bit in the play mechanics department. Still, nothing recreates the *Aliens* experience more than this high-suspense title, and on those grounds I can heartily recommend it. Just redraw the face-huggers next time, 'kay? Those pixels are more scary than anything that actually happens in the game...

G 8 C 6 P 7 M 9 O 5 **87**

With one of the best cinemas I've ever seen, *Alien Trilogy* started out great. And I was actually having a fantastic time playing, until suddenly a huge pixelly mess covered the screen. After squinting my eyes and staring for a second or two, I could make out the vague shape of a face hugger. What's this? Gah! Nasty pixels! Thankfully though, this only happens once in a while. The game, for the most part, is extremely fun. The corridors are dark and disturbing, the aliens are fun to kill, and the background music is excellent. I still can't get over the fact that Probe made this...

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 9 O 8 **87**



KING'S FIELD
PLAYSTATION
ASCII • CD
ACTION/RPG

One of the best 100% polygonal games, and a true 3-D RPG, *King's Field* (actually *King's Field 2*, *1* was a dog) is a vast, puzzling, mysterious and totally addictive experience. I still think the attack mechanism needs some work, but otherwise, I can think of no reason not to run right out and purchase this game. If *Might and Magic* and similar fare make you all warm and fuzzy, *King's Field* will rock your world.

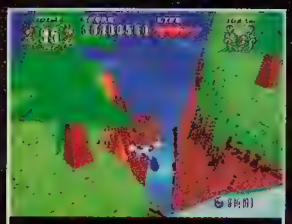
G 8 C 7 P 7 M 8 O 8 **85**

It's been a while since I last played *King's Field*, but it's just as much fun 6 years later, and in English. The game still has the same problems the Japanese version had (most prominently, it's incredibly difficult when you begin playing), but if you can get into it, it'll repay you with a long quest, breath-taking scenery, and a pretty cool storyline.

G 8 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 7 **86**

It was a long time coming, but we PlayStation owners finally have an RPG to play (well, the first one in English). I enjoyed the *Ultima Underworld*-ish first person perspective, and the long quest, but the fighting was a pain for the first few hours. The game starts off very slow, but once you get the long range weapons (like a crossbow) and begin facing more puzzles, *King's Field* becomes quite fun. I just hope this gives more Japanese companies the idea to bring their RPG's here. (Cough! Konami! Cough! Genso!)...

G 8 C 7 P 7 M 7 O 8 **85**



FLOATING RUNNER
PLAYSTATION
T•HQ • CD
3-D ACTION/PLAT.

Floating Runner, Xing's little known and under hyped 3-D platformer has been wisely acquired by T•HQ. *Floating Runner* is beyond a shadow of a doubt, the first true 3-D action platformer, including a sense of depth that is totally unique and 100% pure joy to play. The filled poly's mix well with the T-mapped, and, the game is long on both replayability, and fun. Do not let it fly by.

G 8 C 9 P 9 M 8 O 10 **90**

Floating Runner is the first 3-D platform game that actually acts and plays like a platform game. You have your difficult jumps, multiple enemies, hidden secrets, and that addictive "platform feeling," all in 3-D. The music was great, the characters were cool, and... well... the game is just a blast to play. But the best part is, thanks to T•HQ (good job, guys!), we'll see this cool game in America very soon.

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 8 O 9 **93**

Once you recover from the shock of seeing simplistic, polygonal graphics, you'll discover the joys of long levels, wondrous views, spiraling platforms (just don't fall, you'll hate yourself) and generally awesome gameplay. Infinite continues, but don't let time run out, or it's game over. Though it's a bit too easy at first, *Floating Runner* gets much tougher, and will keep you jumpin' and shootin' for a *long* while. Platform fans, don't miss this one, they're rare on PS! (Someone get *Hermie* a plane ticket stateside!)

G 8 C 8 P 9 M 7 O 8 **88**

GUARDIAN HEROES
SATURN
SEGA • CD
FTG/ACT/RPG

It's Treasure, it's action adventure, and it's unlike *anything* I've played before. GH is a melting pot of genres including fighting, role playing, action, and to a degree, strategy. To play the game twice and see and do the same thing is to play it dozens of times. Treasure has blended the soundtrack so well with the game that you actually feel a part of it, and the new characters... genius. All this, and the best hand drawn graphics on the Saturn, equals near perfection. A must own game!

G 10 C 10 P 9 M 10 O 10 **98**

At first you'll be hopelessly lost in the on-screen chaos, but once you accept that as an essential part of the *Guardian Heroes* experience, this game becomes a blast to play. The characters are very cool (Genjiro especially), and the multiple paths offer plenty of replay value. Two complaints: You should be able to fast forward the text, and the endings are a little short. But those are minor trifles compared to the quality fun time that awaits you in *GH*.

G 8 C 9 P 10 M 7 O 8 **93**

With the perfect blend of side scrolling action and RPG elements, Treasure has once again made an incredible game. In fact, this might be their best offering yet. The *huge* sprites, countless levels of parallax, and an unbelievable amount of enemies on screen at once (with almost no slowdown), totally blew me away. And when you add in the hidden characters, the 6 player vs. mode, and the fact you can play beat the game a bunch of times without seeing every level, *Guardian Heroes* becomes my favorite Saturn game yet.

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 9 O 9 **97**

NIGHT WARRIORS
SATURN
CAPCOM • CD
FIGHTING

In my opinion, Capcom's best fighter outside of *Alpha 2*, *Night Warriors* is as close a translation as I could have hoped for. Unlike *X-Men*, almost all of the animation has made the trip to console along with identical sound and gameplay. I was hoping for an optional arranged soundtrack ala *SFA*, but hey, you can't have everything... or can you? I still want it!

G 9 C 10 P 10 M 9 O 8 **95**

Not only is this a better translation than *X-Men*, but it was actually a great game to begin with. 12 awesome characters, beautiful backgrounds, great play mechanics, and finger-friendly Saturn pad control. I wish they hadn't cut so many sound-effects, though, and that straight-from-arcade music really hurts. Other than that, this is my favorite 2-D fighter on the Saturn (no, I haven't forgotten about *Alpha*...).

G 9 C 9 P 9 M 4 O 6 **91**

Wow! After experiencing the pain that was *X-Men*, I simply did not expect to see this level of quality in *Night Warriors*. Whereas *X-Men* was missing at least 40% frameage, *NW* is missing what seems to be 5% of the frames on small characters and about 10-20% on larger ones. This is probably due to the less crazy BG's, but who cares... *NW* is a much cooler game than *X-Men*. My only gripes are a lack of training mode, no round set option, no time set option, and no arranged music. Otherwise, it's Bolischoy Tavieda!

G 9 C 9 P 8 M 8 O 6 **90**

Ok, here's a quick test to see if you'd like *Doom* for 3DO. Play any version of *Doom*, and blink real fast. Kinda hard to see what's going on? Doesn't make the game very fun, eh? Well, that's exactly what the 3DO version looks like in motion. Of course, you could always shrink the screen size to raise the frame rate, but I don't think any fan would enjoy playing *Doom* on a postage-stamp sized window. Suddenly, the SNES version's starting to look real good...

G 4 C 3 P 3 M 5 O 4 **50**

Doom did kick start an entire genre but by today's standards even a perfect version would be a questionable endeavor. The 3DO version doesn't even come close. You can't fault the hardware here, this is just a wickedly bad translation. Shrink the hyper letter-boxed screen to Game Gear size and you've almost got the Jag version. the soundtrack is cool and that's about it. This is not a good swan song for such a deserving title. I hereby beg Id for a Virtual Boy version... *Pleeease...*

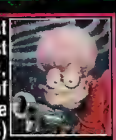
G 7 C 6 P 7 M 8 O 5 **50**

This is the worst version of *Doom* I have ever played. Pixelly graphics, non-existent player control, a hyper-slow frame rate, boring music, and vintage 1989 special effects lowlight this shameful game. It's such a shame that a title as respected as *Doom* is tarnished by this lackluster PC translation. If you own a 3DO and want to play a first person shooter, save yourself the embarrassment and buy *PO'ed* or *Killing Time* instead. You'll thank me later.

G 5 C 4 P 5 M 5 O 5 **49**

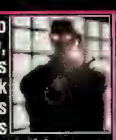
DOOM
3DO
ART DATA • CD
3-D ADVENTURE

It can be said in all honesty that *Policenauts* has one of the best game storylines ever. Of course, I (a person whose entire grasp of the Japanese language came from three whole weeks of class) had a bit of help from Nick Rox understanding the intricate plot. I can only dream of seeing this "sequel" to *Snatcher* in English (I want to play it again so bad), but thanks to Konami's sports fever, the chances of seeing gems like this (or *Genso*) here in the states is about nil...



G 8 C 6 P 7 M 9 O 8 **94**

Ah, Konami. They know how to tell a story. And like in *Genso*, *Policenauts* doesn't need its flashy FMV and great soundtrack to make it a great game... It has substance. The shooting levels are pretty cool (get a mouse), but this game is still just a digital comic, and is really a one time only ride. Still, well worth the price of admission... If you know Japanese. I won't even bother to beg Konami to bring it out here... What's the point? (sigh...)



G 8 C 6 P 8 M 9 O 10 **92**

Once again, supreme adventure heaven is here, for you, from the gods at Konami. I truly thought adventure gaming could get no better than *Snatcher*, in terms of storyline and gameplay, at least... and boy, was I wrong. The big K has outdone themselves in everything from the beyond-beautiful music to the professional quality cinemas. And the story... well, I can't even go there it's so great, let alone WANT to for fear of ruining it for you. If Konami doesn't find a hole in their sports-ridden lineup to release this here, they're SNAPPED.

G 10 C na P na M 10 O 8 **100**

POLICENAUTS
PLAYSTATION
KONAMI • CD
DIGITAL COMIC

Can this be? Is it a real Konami game? One without balls (sports balls), and scoring, and polygons? Why yes! *Genso Suikoden* is the best *traditional* RPG I've yet played on a 32-bit console. Konami's fighting system is a genius design, both mechanically and graphically, the story's deep and above the kindergarten mentality, but best of all, YOU DON'T GET IN A FIGHT EVERY TWO INCHES YOU TRAVEL! With the new Konami fully etched into the sports scene, it will be a cryin' shame if *GS* never comes out here, so... license it!

G 9 C na P 8 M 9 O 8 **90**

I've been waiting for an RPG like this for years. Why can no other companies grasp how important a good storyline and characters are? Not since *Lunar 2* have I cared about my party members as much as I care about my characters in *Genso*. I'm sure *FF7* will be spectacular, but *Genso* gets the gold as the first *great* 32-bit RPG on any system. And don't even get me started about the music... I could talk all night.

G 7 C na P 10 M 10 O 10 **97**

Well, what can I say except "Konami Loves You™?" At first glance I was turned off by *Genso*'s framey overhead world "effects," and its semi-16-bit feel, but the incredibly original storyline and gorgeous battle scenes, not to mention 108 party members, three fight systems, and some of Konami's finest music to date, drew me right back in. An absolute must for RPG fans... This is easily the best 32-bit RPG yet, and another game Konami must be punished for if they don't bring it out.

G 9 C na P 8 M 10 O 7 **90**

GENSO SUIKODEN
PLAYSTATION
KONAMI • CD
RPG

Sidewinder looks, feels, and sounds just like a true flight simulator, until you get close to the ground. The lack of speed here is so unbearable, any sense of flight was totally lost for me. Why? What possible reason could Asmik have for ruining a potentially outstanding game by doing this? No pop-up, lotsa enemies, and nice music makes this game playable, but I'll just hold off until something a tad more realistic comes along.

G 8 C 7 P 2 M 7 O 6 **70**

Sidewinder comes really close to being amazing, but then crashes and burns big time. Why even bother making a realistic feeling, technically accurate flight sim when you can only make it go 15 miles per hour!? This game is one gigantic school crossing zone. Impressive looking, but fundamentally repetitive and not much fun, this is *Ace Combat* all over again. I'll take *Warhawk*, thanks.

G 6 C 5 P 6 M 8 O 5 **58**

Finally! A new and refreshing flight sim! Although *SW* has its good and bads (note how the ground never speeds up as you zip by it), the overall feeling of no pop-up, and crisp, clean polygons give it a definite "thumbs-up" on my simulator list. The controls are fairly easy to get used to, and the missions are really insane! A real step above *Ace Combat*, and definitely the most blazing flight sim yet. Hey! You can even link-up with another player and blast him right outta the sky! I like it!

G 9 C 9 P 7 M 8 O 9 **89**

SIDEWINDER
PLAYSTATION
ASMIK • CD
FLIGHT SIMULATION

OK, an overhead shooter with some nifty polygon visual effects... Sound good? Well, for some reason I didn't like it. I'm sure it might have had something to do with the lack of any challenge, annoyingly repetitive music, or (besides the scantily used polygons) the graphics looking very 16-bit. Not only that, *Stahlfeder* was just boring to play... First *Two-Ten Kaku*, now this, what's with shooters on the PlayStation lately?

G 5 C 6 P 6 M 4 O 7 **60**

God, this game is boring. If this game didn't have its 5 or 6 polygon parts, no one would even look at it twice, but instead it gets this undeserved media image of somehow representing the synthesis of 2-D and 3-D shooting. The regular game is pretty much a joke, and really, so are the polygon parts. This would be impressive if it were, say, an FX chip game, but does Santos honestly expect to impress anyone who's ever played *Philosoma* (which at least *looked* good)...?

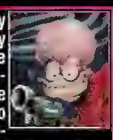
G 5 C 4 P 6 M 2 O 2 **38**

Ouch! I don't even want to GO here. While I can't say *Stahlfeder* is as bad as *Two-Ten Kaku* (it almost is), I can say this: 30-minute long shooter with fancy eye sweet-meat bosses and terrible tunes. This game is SO not worth your time and money, it's nearly indescribable. If you must have a PS shooter, go for *Philosoma* instead...

G 7 C 5 P 3 M 4 O 2 **55**

STAHLFEDER
PLAYSTATION
SANTOS• CD
SHOOTER

Although I'll probably be riled by the rest of the GF staff, I actually enjoyed *Ninku*. Sure, it didn't have any chain combos, smooth animation, or logical gameplay like almost every other fighter claims to contain, but it does promise something no one else can: a laugh or two. Sometimes I get tired of *Street Fighter* or *Tekken*, and need something a little more light-hearted; that's where *Ninku* comes in. And although it can't hold a candle to any major fighters, it's still a fun game to play, plain and simple.



G 6 C 7 P 6 M 7 O 8 **79**

I get the feeling that this would have been a really awesome game if I actually cared about the series, but *Ninku*? Who really cares? The backgrounds are impressive by themselves, as are the character animations, but they don't really work when put together. The control's fun and all, but you know, it's *Ninku*. You'd really have to be a fan of the show to truly appreciate it.

G 8 C 7 P 5 M 7 O 5 **72**

The coolest thing about *Ninku* is its hyper Japanese novelty. While it does have impressive texture mapped polygon playfields (that rotate during battle) on the serious side, it also has big comedic value. Lil' Ninku is a nasty character who I'm told is quite the devil in the anime series from which this is derived. Turn to page 68 for even more freaky behavior. The game plays like a standard fighter, albeit a tad slow and pseudo 3-D. Overall, an enjoyable non-enthusiast fighter.

G 7 C 7 P 8 M 7 O 8 **70**

NINKU
SATURN
SEGA • CD
FIGHTING

GAMEFAN: UP TO THE MINUTE

THIS JUST IN! *VIRTUA FIGHTER 3* DEBUTS AT THE AOU!

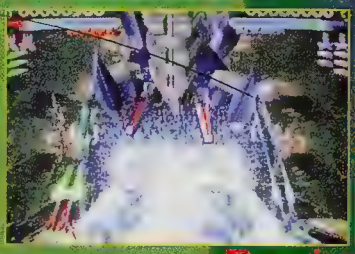
Literally as we were scraping the last bits of wax to 'Up To The Minute', we got a call from Kei, who's in Japan attending the AOU show. According to Kei the game looks like [illegible] the portrait collection! Not only are they totally smooth with no visible jagged edges, but their eyes move independently, as the camera [illegible] *Fighting Sonic* and *VF Kids* are the other two big attractions. Of course we'll have a complete report, along with shots, next month in Japan Now. Stay tuned!

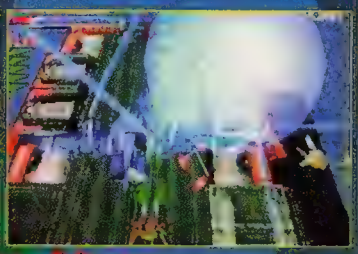
Gunblade NY

Namco and Sega always seem to come up with the same concept independently of each other; this is true of *Tokyo Wars* and *Gunblade NY*. Shooting games in capital cities! Wow. Lovin'.

RayStorm

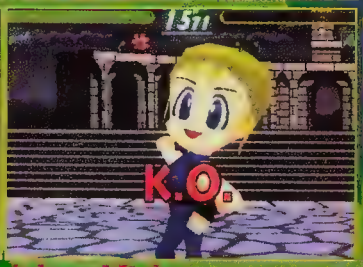
RayStorm is the sequel to Taito's '94 shooter *RayForce/Layer Section/Galactic Attack*. The innovative lock-on laser is back, and this time everything's constructed out of polygons, and the gameplay is in a cool "half top-view" perspective. Looks cool!





Dead or Alive

[illegible] you may be thinking, "This looks pretty familiar." It should... this [illegible]'s Model 2, but it's not by Sega! This is Tecmo's *Dead Or Alive*, a third-party Model 2 game. More shocking news... there's Punch, Kick, and Throw; this is the shocker - Guard! *DoA* is out in spring.



Tokyo Wars

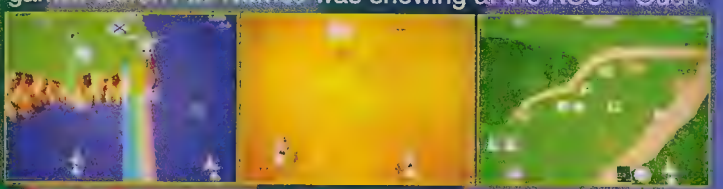
Tokyo Wars is a four-player "survival tank shooting game" set in Tokyo of the future. Maneuver your tank through huge city maps, hunting down your opponent. Sega and Namco are coming up with some *cool* competitive games of late.

Virtua Fighter Kids

Ah! Some real gameplay shots of *Virtua Fighter Kids*. Much later on in this issue, you'll be seeing some [illegible] in Japan Now; ignore those. As you can see, VFK has [illegible] *Fighting Vipers* and uh... big heads. My personal [illegible] *Fighter Kids*' as-yet-unannounced hardware is [illegible] Saturn/with ST-V: There is much polygon and what looks [illegible] backgrounds. We'll have more [illegible]

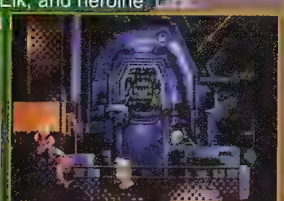
New Namco System II Games

On the upper left is *Dunk Mania*, and the rest are *Xevious3*. *Dunk Mania* is a blazing new basketball game with multiple motion-captured characters and... well... *Xevious3* is a remake of the classic 1982 shooter *Xevious*, but constructed entirely of polygons. Luckily, these two games weren't all Namco was showing at the AOU... Ouch.



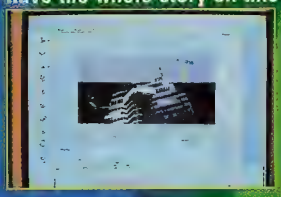
Arc the Lad II

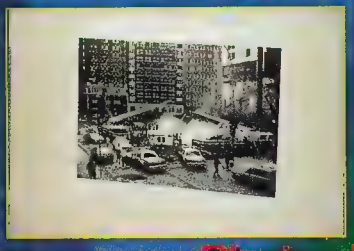
[illegible]-Craft's promised sequel to last year's [illegible] *Arc the Lad* is currently 30% done, and is on the way for a spring release. *ATL II* has three times as many battles as the first and five times as many CG movies. Your original party of seven will now be joined by a new hero, Elk, and heroine Lina.



Probing the Globe!

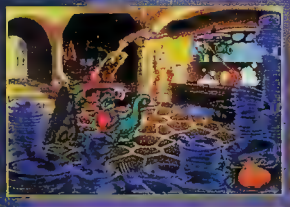
Dateline Croyden, just outside of London. While visiting Probe's HQ, Jay Puryear, now a frequent flier, got a behind-the-scenes look at the making of *Die Hard Trilogy*, featured on page 28. The *DHT* team at Probe actually traveled to the Big Apple and filmed parks, buildings, lightposts, and other similar NY fare (while dodging gunfire and windshield washers no doubt), to use as the actual textures in the game! We'll have the whole story on this and more hot Probe surprises, next month.

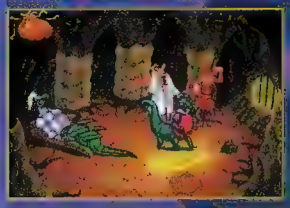


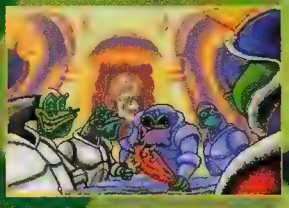


Blazing Dragons

Crystal Dynamics' *Blazing Dragons* for the Saturn and PS has a good shot at becoming the best animated point and clicker in gaming history. Featuring voices from the likes of comedian Harry Shearer, Cheech Marin, of Cheech and Chong fame, and Jessica Hahn, of Howard Stern fame, this one's got big fun written all over it. Though not overjoyed about this category I must admit, when these adventures are done this well, they are truly quite happenin'. I'll be playin' this one. Is *Blazing Dragons* up to the challenge posed by *Discworld* and *Brain Dead 13*? Find out next month.

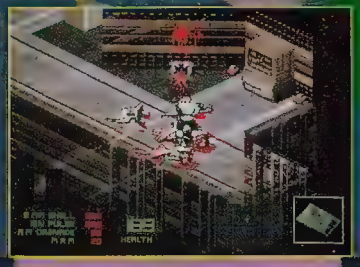


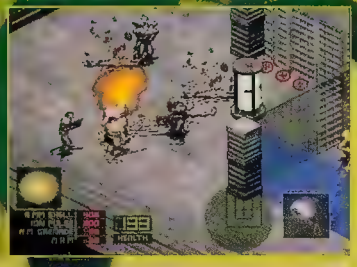




Overkill

Finally! It's been nearly a full year since we've seen anything new on Konami's ultrarealistic PlayStation game, *Overkill*. As you can see, not only is *Overkill* not for the faint of heart, but it exhibits that classic Konami look reminiscent of some of the best games of both the 8 and 16-bit eras. The action category, in my eyes, will always be where Konami belongs. I cannot stress to you how happy I am to see this game. I only pray that *Castlevania* is close behind. We should have more on *Overkill* next month.





ALIEN TRILOGY

Finally! It seems I've been waiting for *Alien Trilogy* almost as long as I've been waiting for a decent sequel to *Alien*... But as *Alien Trilogy* is one of those rare titles for which Acclaim tells their developer, "Take as much time as you need," I'm certainly not going to complain about the delay. Probe put a lot of effort into this one, and the results speak for themselves; *Alien Trilogy* is one of the best movie-to-game translations to date.

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PROBE

PUBLISHER - ACCLAIM

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW

TAKUHI

Truly an authentic *Alien* experience. Work on that hit tracking, though...

But is it another *Doom* clone? Yes, I'm afraid so. Though Probe tried pretty hard to differentiate *Alien Trilogy* from the current glut of *Doom*-inspired action titles, there's really nothing too new or innovative here. But what is here is, for the most part, done right.

All 3 movies are represented in *Alien Trilogy*, with each one being the basis for a 12-level section. (Obviously, they're only loosely based on the films... I guess they figured that the *Alien* and *Alien 3* games wouldn't be quite so much fun if they each had a total of only one enemy.) This is probably the coolest part of the game... Though the play mechanics remain basically the same, there's always lots of cool new backgrounds and a few new enemies to look forward to when you begin a new section. The games are all linked together by a few minutes of excellently done, very high-budget computer-rendered FMV.

The game mechanics are very *Doom*... Explore large areas, pick up guns, shoot enemies, look for the exit, etc. But while the theme's the same, *Alien Trilogy* has an atmosphere all its own. The game's very dark, and full of metallic colors, all of which light up for the briefest of moments when you fire a weapon. There's a ton of different wall, floor, and ceiling textures, and this game's artists have mastered the art of using cold, dim lighting to cover anything with a spooky antiseptic glow. Each level has quite a few different areas, too, so while you may spend most of the time in dark linking tunnels, you'll find many well-lit and impressive looking hospitals, control rooms, locker rooms, rec rooms, and even swimming pools. You'll find plenty of furniture in these rooms, too, from cots to desks to cold-sleep pods. The degree to which you can interact with these items is impressive: You can blow open lockers, break windows, and even open up the cold-sleep pods.

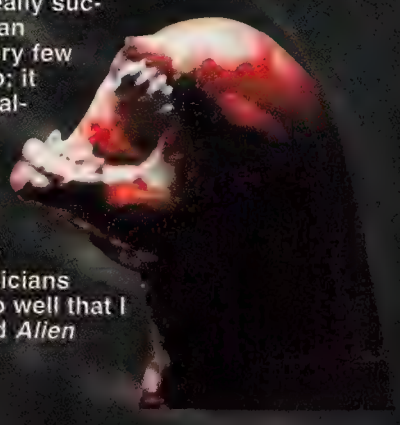
Complimenting the creepy mood of the game's locations is the music... Full movie soundtrack style that sneaks into the game in a quiet, ambient sort of way, and then twists into a sort of panicked intensity when the action gets more intense. Beautiful stuff, and it's well complimented by decently sloshy, squishy, alien sound effects.

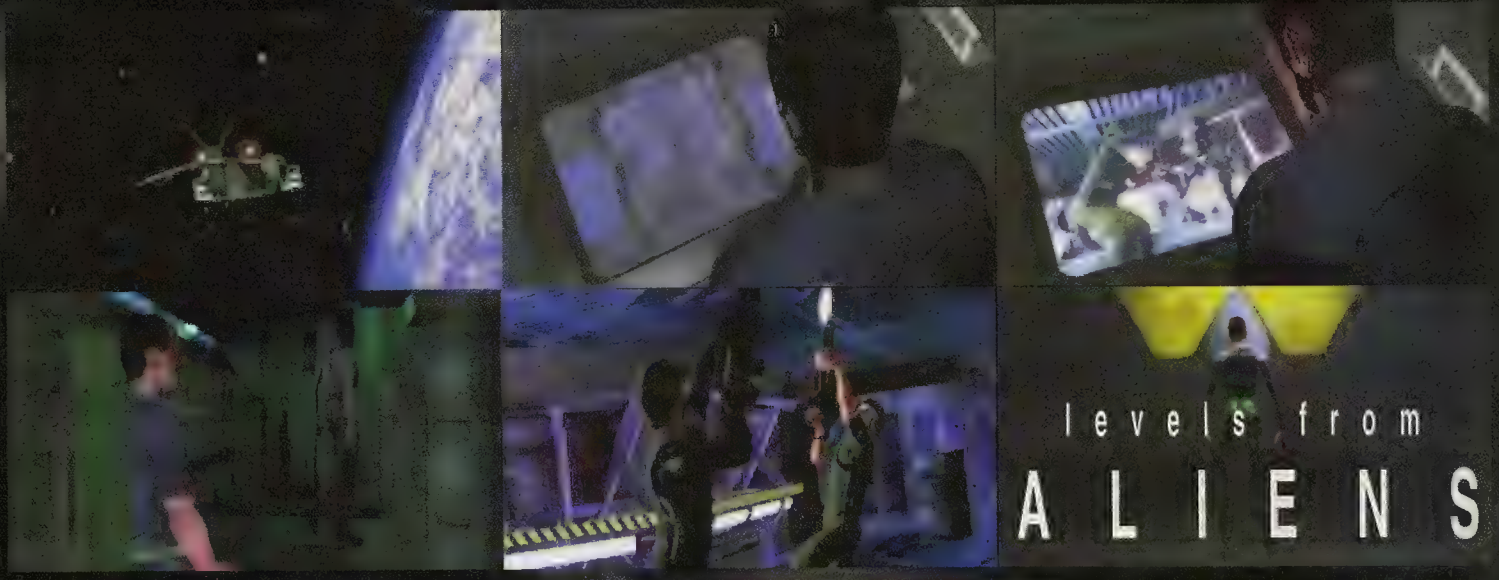
Another big addition is the variety of different mission objectives. Each game's storyline sort of flows, from reconnaissance missions in the early parts to destroying (or fixing) specific targets in the later parts, and then to taking out a boss. Mission objectives include everything from destroying specific enemy specimens to collecting the ID tags of dead comrades. There's definitely a good deal of variety here.

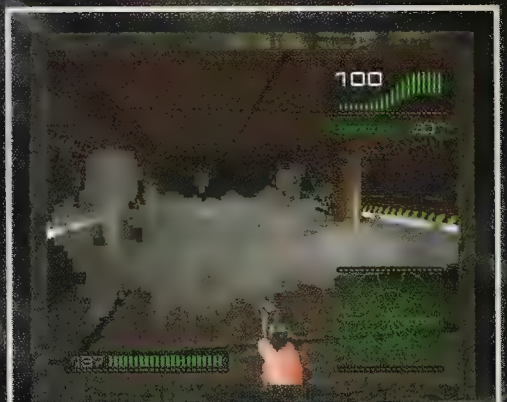
But I do have some big complaints with *Alien Trilogy*. The enemies aren't as well done as they could have been... They pixelate close up, to an especially embarrassing degree in the case of the face huggers. Even worse, they're very lacking in the AI department. Infected marines just stand there and shoot you, as you shoot them. The bosses are particularly easy: Just maneuver them into a corner, and then unload your assault rifle, leaving them virtually paralyzed.

Worst of all is the hit tracking. Like *Doom*, you can't look up or down, so when an enemy is on a plane above or below you, you have to leave it up to the computer to know which direction you're trying to shoot. But it really sucks at this, so the whole strategy of trying to catch enemies unaware by blowing them away from a higher platform or through a window is gone. The sad thing is that sometimes they can shoot up at you, even when you can't do the same to them.

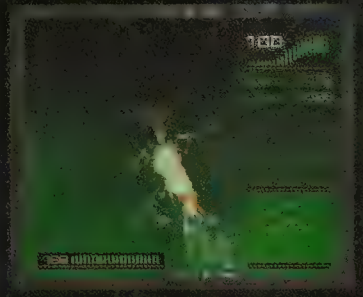
While *Alien Trilogy* doesn't really succeed in being a better *Doom* than *Doom*, it does do something very few licensed games can claim to do; it makes you feel like you're actually existing in the world on which it's based. And that really is a rare and remarkable feat. So even though the programmers missed a few key points when designing the play mechanics, the artists and musicians captured the feel of the films so well that I can wholeheartedly recommend *Alien Trilogy* to *Alien* fans. -Takuhi







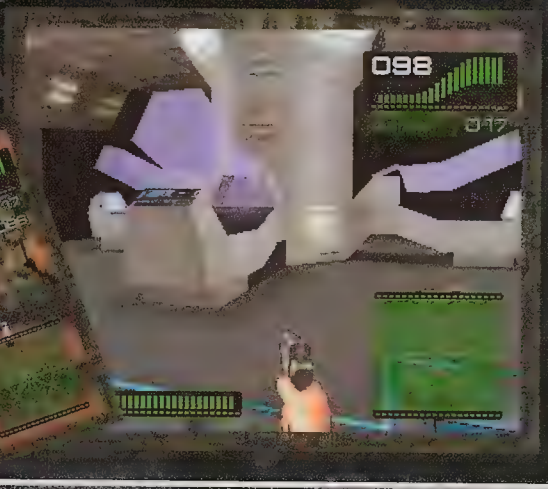
A couple of new twists on the *Doom* concept: There are obstacles, such as the steam vents, that must be avoided, and you have to use specific weapons to destroy specific obstacles, so be careful and don't completely drain any one weapon just on enemies.



levels from

ALIEN 3

You can interact with just about any obstacle you come across in *Alien Trilogy*. You can open the cold-sleep pods to find the ID tags of alien victims (or, if you're not so lucky, the chest bursters who killed them), break windows and lattice walls for easy shortcuts, and blow away lockers and curtains to look for hidden items.



levels from
ALIEN

TOKYO HIGHWAY BATTLE

首都高バトル

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - JALECO

PUBLISHER - JALECO

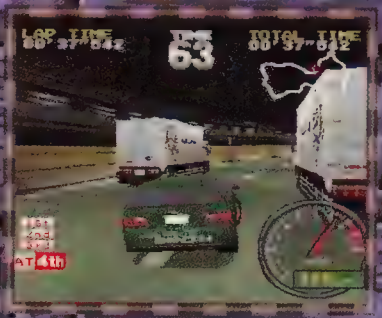
FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - JUNE

K LEE
THIS IS JUST WHAT I WANTED TO SEE!



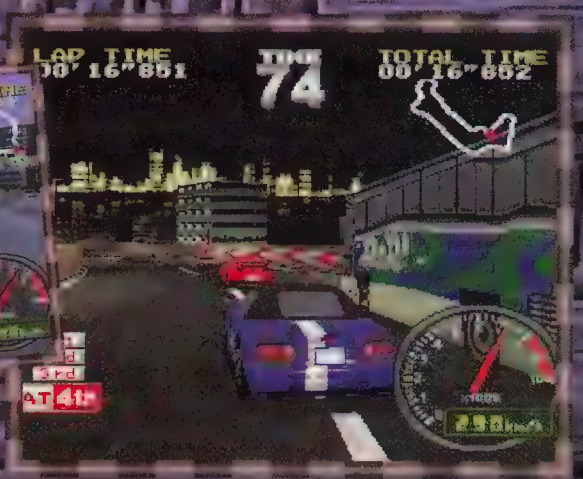
Here's a look at Jaleco's new (and first next-gen) 3-D racing game, *Tokyo Highway Battle*. At this point the game is quite early, and therefore still a little rough around the edges. Even so, *THB* has potential.

Let's start with the graphics. It's obvious that Jaleco has taken the *Ridge Racer* approach to the game graphics. Like *RR*, *Tokyo Highway Battle*'s pre-race set-up screens consist of 3 rotating, flat-shaded polygon track layouts and multiple large rotating texture-mapped polygon cars. Out on the track, the deja vu's continue. Imagine a game that combines the graphical look of *Ridge Racer* and *Ridge Racer Revolution*, the sweeping turns and elevation changes of *Rave Racer* (Namco's arcade sequel to *Ridge Racer 2*), and you'll get a feel for what *Tokyo Highway Battle* is about.

As its title states, the 3 tracks in *Tokyo Highway Battle* are taken from (surprise) actual streets and highways in Tokyo, Japan. Skyscrapers and billboards line the sides of each track and, unlike the race cars in *RR*, buses, 18 wheelers, sedans and other real-world vehicles populate the streets.

For a yet un-completed game, *THB* features a surprising amount of refinement in the areas of car control and response. So, to say the very least, *THB* is going to play very well. Power slides play a big part in the gameplay.

Jaleco may have a hit on their hands with *THB*. As it stands, the control is in fighting condition, the visuals are good, the 3-D scaling is decent, and the tracks are diverse and realistic. We'll keep a close eye on *Tokyo Highway Battle*. K. Lee



REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - XING

PUBLISHER - T•HQ

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN - TBA U.S.

Floating Runner

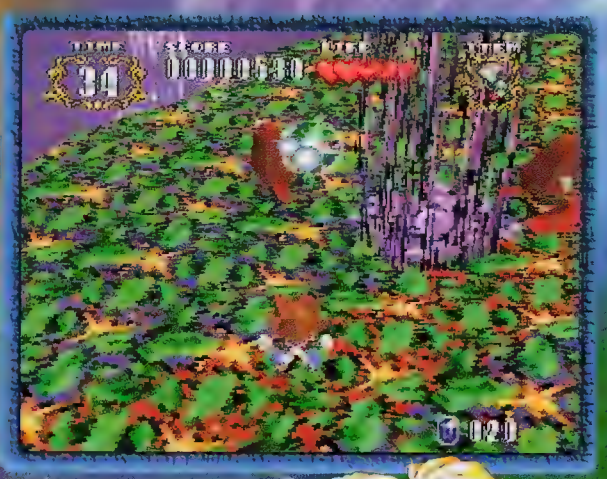
7つの水晶の物語

T•HQ has an impressive lineup of PS games headed our way, the most exciting of which is the recent import release, *Floating Runner*, by XING. What's exciting about *Floating Runner* is that it's the first true 3-D platformer to surface on a 32-bit home console. I know, it was supposed to be *Jumping Flash*, right? Well, not quite. While *Jumping Flash* did exude supreme platformness, it was all harnessed within a floating island structure. *Floating Runner*'s levels are spread out over a vast area, moving forward, left and right, and up and down, via floating platforms. With ten areas to complete and two stages in each, *FR* is not only supremely entertaining, but long as well. The gameplay is not only finely tuned and way fun but

INTENSE 3-D PLATFORM GAMING FOR YOUR PLAYSTATION... FROM T•HQ!?

thankfully, ain't all that easy. So, on with the review!

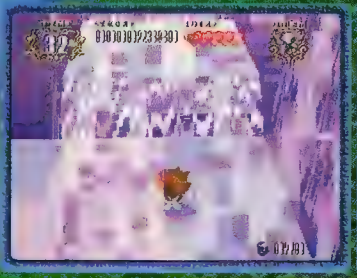
As anyone with two eyes can see, *Floating Runner* is comprised completely of polygons, both texture mapped and flat shaded. One may ask why the flat shaded variety are present at all, but once you're playing you see why. Any added complexity to the graphics would have created a bit of a mess, as this game is vastly multi-tiered. The areas that are textured



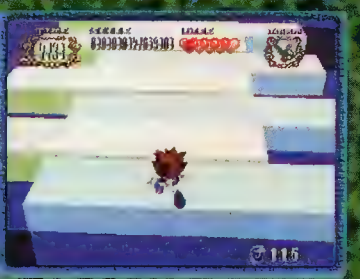
are brilliantly done so, and the flat shaded variety never seem out of place. The only sprites in the game are the explosions and lighting effects produced by certain weapons, of which there are six you can find and use.

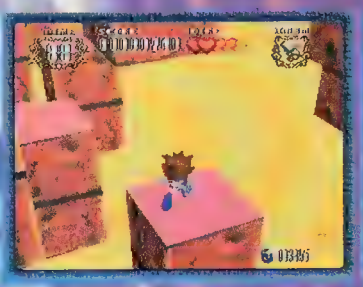
Adding to the visual force in *FR* is the fantastic no-slow-down-at-all 30 fps rate at which everything moves. And trust me, everything moves. Not only are the polygon enemies animated smoothly, but waterfalls, creeks, flaming torches, lightning, and water slides are all fluidly animated as well.

Graphics aside (we all know it takes much more to make a great game), where *FR*'s true genius lies is in its



non-linear gameplay. You'll often find yourself a hundred or so feet over (or under) a given playfield. A great example of this can be seen on the last page of this layout where Ray is standing atop a huge tree which he first ascends, by jumping branch to branch, and then lofts off of to the adjoining platform below. Other such memo-

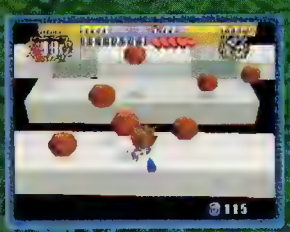


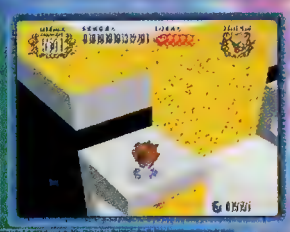


rable gameplay elements are the many hovering platforms, lengthy water slides you must zip down and hurl off, and the all around feeling of height you get as you negotiate up winding paths.

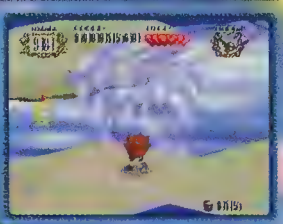
To say the very least, *Floating Runner*'s 3-D platform gameplay is among the best yet exhibited on any next-gen platform. Another key element (or non-element in this case) is *Floating Runner*'s lack of an on-screen map. You'll actually get lost in many of the huge levels.

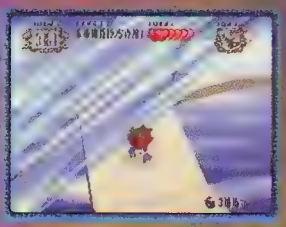
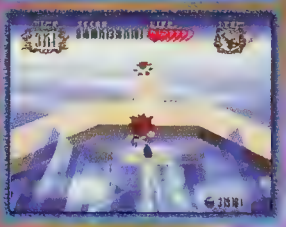
This ties in directly with actually finishing the game, because you can die and continue an unlimited number of times,

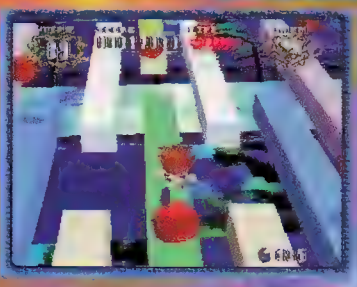
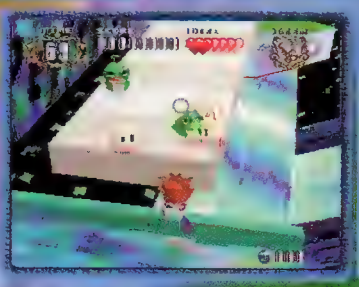
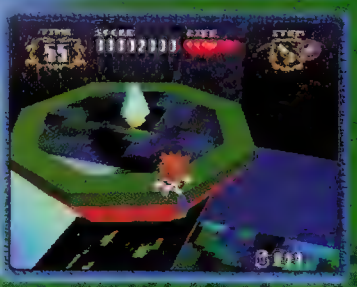
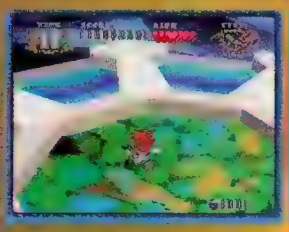
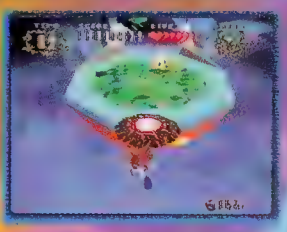
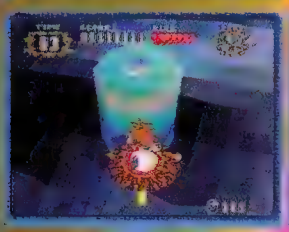




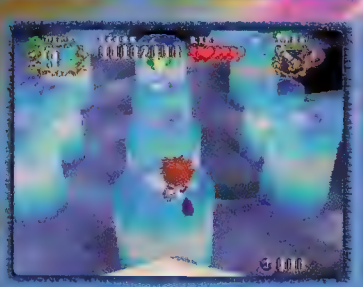
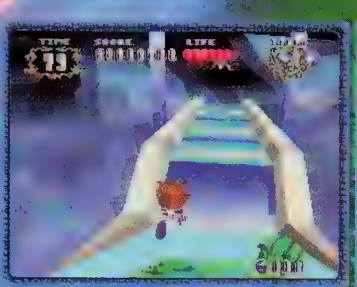
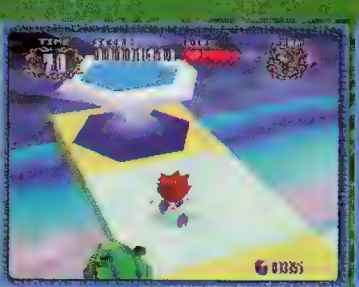
losing only weapon power, but run out of time and it's game over, man. Thankfully, the designers have allotted plenty of time to complete each area once you know where to go. There are two camera angles in *FR* which you can toggle on the fly: one overhead, and one slightly behind. The overhead cam allows you to peek over



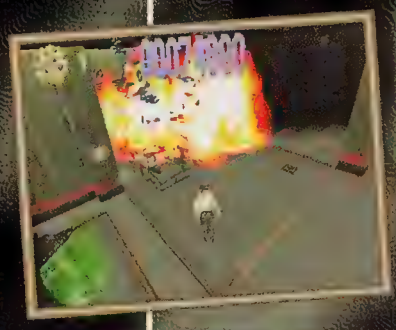



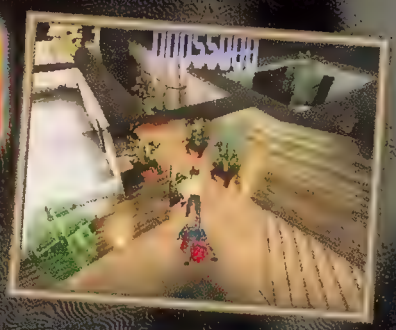







ledges to platforms below, otherwise you'll want to stick to the behind the player view. The only negative comment I can give, besides a couple of mundane tunes among a great soundtrack, is the lack of a guardian for each area. Seeing the awesome last boss left me wishing they'd have created more. But hey, maybe in the sequel. This game definitely deserves one. Add Floating Runner to your PS stash and file it under 3-D polygonal replayable joy. -E Storm

DIE HARD TRILOGY





PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PROBE

PUBLISHER - FOX INTER.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - MAY

ORION
PROBE IS DEFINITELY ON A ROLL.

Fox Interactive's first PlayStation title employs three totally different game engines, each varying in graphics and playability, but holding in common a feverish level of intensity. *Die Hard Trilogy* has 35 levels broken up evenly among the three different scenarios, but in an odd twist, you can actually switch freely between the three games, instead of having to play them all in order.

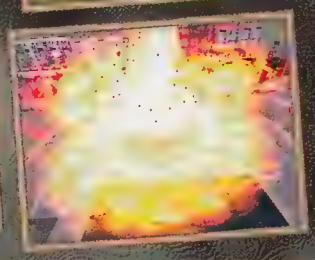
The game modeled after the first *Die Hard* is the one most faithful to the movie on which it's based. You must make your way up through Nakatomi Plaza, from the parking garage to the penthouse. The perspective is sort of a cross between *Commando* and *Lone Soldier*, with a POV that always follows right above and behind the hero. It's a bit more suspenseful and strategic than the other two games, but there's plenty of high-powered weaponry and villains to kill.

The *Die Harder* game can be summed up in two words: *Virtua Cop*. It's compatible with the controller or mouse, and should work with the gun, if one ever comes out. The shooting scene has 3 scenarios, an airport, snowmobile chase (sounds promising), and helicopter ride. This scenario definitely delivers a lot more high-speed shooting action than gamers who have played *Horned Owl* will be used to (*major* understatement).

The final scene is most similar to *Twisted Metal*, in that it features vehicular mayhem with a high degree of freedom of movement, as you hunt for bombs hidden all over the

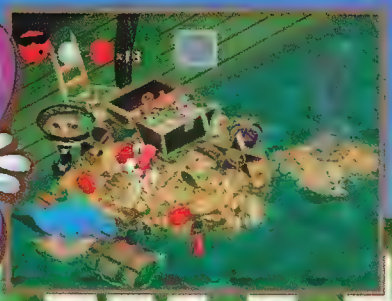
city. The settings cover many familiar locations of New York, from congested Wall Street roads to the grassy hills of Central Park. Although it's a bit too soon to make final judgments, this is, in my opinion, the coolest part of the game.

The visual effects are insane in *Die Hard Trilogy*, but the graphics aren't just chrome. It's all interactive, meaning there's not much on the screen you can't blow up. You can shoot up monitors at Nakatomi Plaza, blow up parked cars in NYC, and even crash a few planes at Dulles just for kicks (just kidding 'bout that last one...). The details aren't always just for show, either. For example, blowing up a car in the garage from the *Die Hard* scenario activates sprinklers complete with translucent water you can walk through... very cool! Fox Interactive didn't censor themselves in the carnage department, either; you get everything from blood pouring from John McClane's glass-gouged feet to puddles of bodily fluid from mistakenly shot hostages. Look for the full review in a future issue of GameFan. -Orion



SPOT GOES TO HOLLYWOOD

PREVIEW



PlayStation

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - VIRGIN

PUBLISHER - VIRGIN

FORMAT - CD

NO. OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE - JUNE

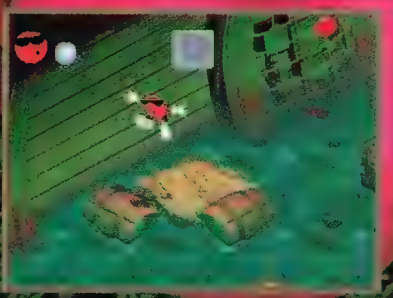
It seems like we've been seeing pictures of the 32-bit versions of *Spot Goes to Hollywood* for nearly a year now. The 16-bit versions are out, but it's hard to really get into a game when you can't stop thinking about how much better the upcoming Saturn and PlayStation versions are going to be. The long wait's not over yet, but at least we finally have something to show for it. The 32-bit *Spot* has the same solid play mechanics, but more levels, more colors, an arranged soundtrack, and some of the best CG cinemas you're likely to be seeing any time soon.

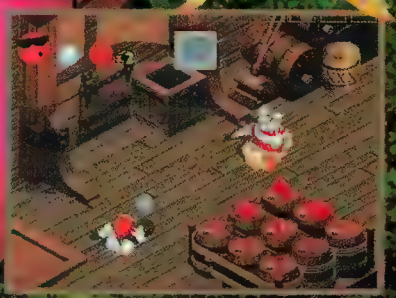
The version we're showing here is pretty bare bones... When the game's finished in April or May (it's not due for release 'till the second half of '96), it'll probably look quite a bit different. As you can see here, the levels mimic the same themes as in the 16-bit versions, but with many more scenes; while the 16-bit versions were rushed out for a holiday launch, the 32-bit teams are being given all the time they need. So Saturn and PlayStation owners can look forward to 23 multi-part levels (in which you can now use a memory card or cartridge to save at the midpoints), 200-some hidden areas, and over a dozen little mini-games. Each world has pretty much the same settings as before, but with a lot more variety. Added to the pirate world, for example, are the ability to ride on cannons, battles in sunken treasure rooms, and a raft chase.

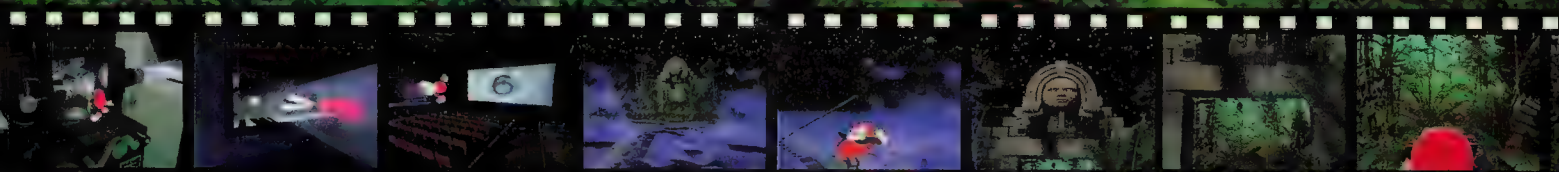
Other areas are inspired by a host of video game classics. You can fight ghosts *Pac Man*-style by finding power pellets in the haunted house, for example. Other scenes pay tribute to such classics as *Space Invaders*, *Berzerk*, *Centipede*, and *Tron*, and there's even a graveyard shooting level modeled after the 1st stage of SNK's *Viewpoint*. Very cool.

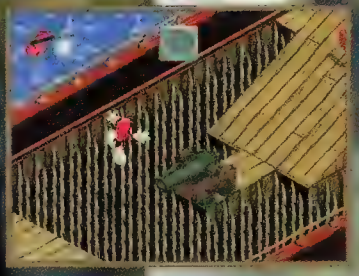
The whole game is put together in a *Yoshi's Island* sort of way where you can go back to replay stages you've already beaten to find the

TAKUHI









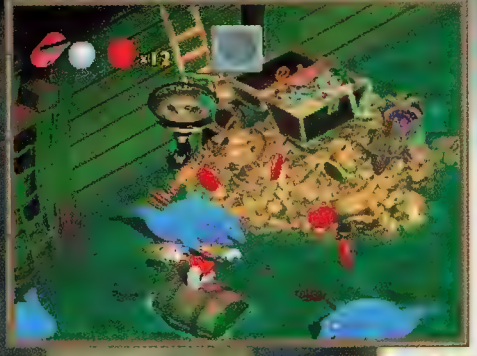
hidden stuff. But if you get a 100[illegible], I bet you get a lot more than some lame little [illegible] on the title screen (yes, I'm still bitter about *Yoshi's Island*...). I won't tell you exactly what, but it's clearly something Virgin's put a lot of time into.

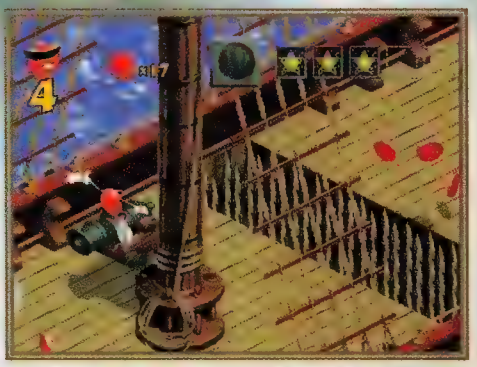
There's no system specified for the game you're looking at now, because as of yet, both 32-bit versions are exactly the same. But in a few months, they'll be split apart, to be improved in whatever applicable ways. For the Saturn version, that means mist effects and souped-up backgrounds, and for the PlayStation version, more polygon effects and possibly some transparencies and light source-shading (although Virgin's developed a sort of software light-sourcing technique that is employed in both versions.). The two versions will be released simultaneously.

Also new to the 32-bit versions are some very impressive intermissions. The opening is particularly impressive, and looks nearly laser disc quality on the PlayStation. Virgin's wisely decided to eschew Cinepak for the Saturn version, and the video through their own FMV driver looks almost as good on the Saturn as it does on the PlayStation.

The music will also turn some heads. Perfectly-fit John Williams music has been chosen for the cinemas, while *Skeleton Warriors* composer Tommy Tallarico is handling the in-game music. The quality is excellent, and Virgin's used a new little trick to allow them to loop the music that's actually recorded on the CD, so you not only get a seamlessly linked soundtrack, but also get to listen to it through a regular CD player for free.

So Virgin definitely has a strong foundation for [illegible] bit conversion here, it's just too bad we'll have to wait so long to actually play it. But hey, we've waited this long, a few more months won't hurt, right? Stay tuned for a full review [illegible] summer/fall '96 launch. -Tahsin





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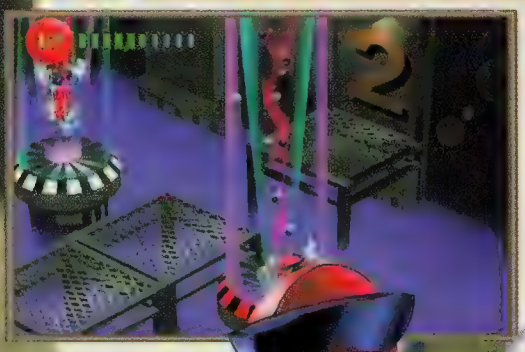
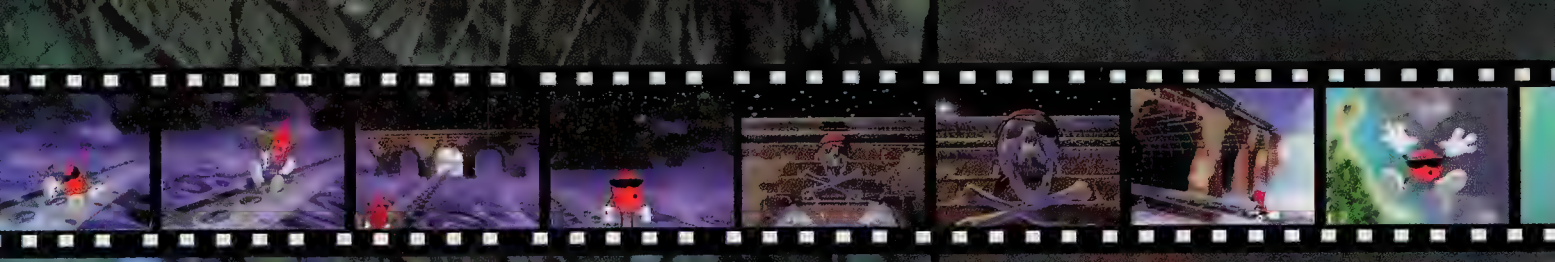
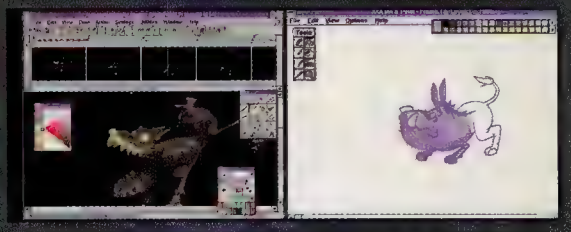


HORROR
ADVENTURE

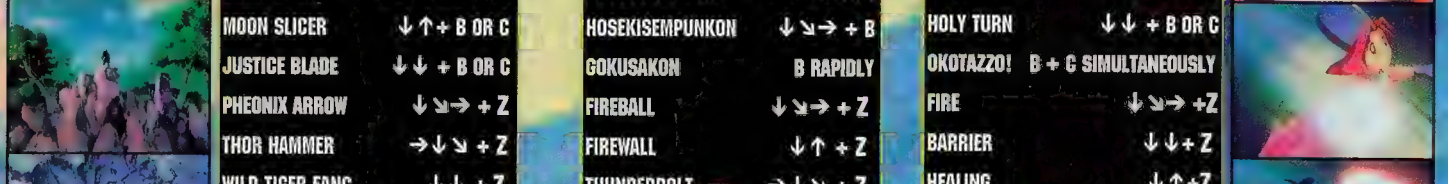


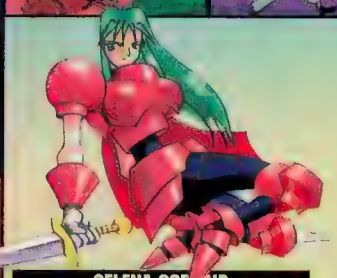
The Spot Team



SPITTING
CLAM

SATURN SECTOR





SELENA CORSAIR	
SONIC BOOM	↓↘→ + B OR C
MOON SLICER	↓↑+ B OR C
JUSTICE BLADE	↓↓ + B OR C
PHEONIX ARROW	↓↘→ + Z
THOR HAMMER	→↓↘ + Z
WILD TIGER FANG	↓↓ + Z

RANDY GREEN	
KUUBUSEMPAKON	↓↓+ B OR C
HOSEKISEMPUNKON	↓↘→ + B
GOKUSAKON	B RAPIDLY
FIREBALL	↓↘→ + Z
FIREWALL	↓↑ + Z
THUNDERBOLT	→↓↘ + Z

NICOLE NEIL	
HAINO	↓↘→ + C
HOLY TURN	↓↓ + B OR C
OKOTAZZO!	B + C SIMULTANEOUSLY
FIRE	↓↘→ +Z
BARRIER	↓↓+ Z
HEALING	↓↑+Z

IBUSHI GINJIRO	
RYU GENJETSU	↓↓ + B OR C
RYU TAIJUTSU	↓↘→ + B OR C
SOJUTSU MUISHEN SO	→→→→
KATON	→↓↘+Z
RAIDENSHO	←↓→+Z
RAIDON	↓↑+Z

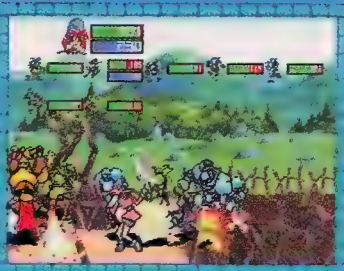
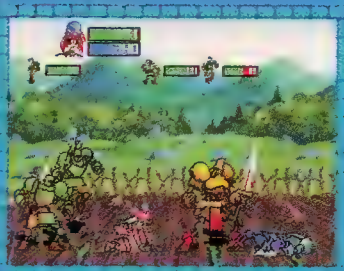
HAN SOMEWELL	
HAN DYNAMITE	↓↘→ + B OR C
HAN SPECIAL	B RAPIDLY
HAN FINAL	↓↓ + B OR C
HAN MAXIMUM	↓↓+ B OR C IN AIR
HAN MIRACLE	B RAPIDLY IN AIR
HAN BURNINGS	↓↘→+Z

DEVELOPER - TREASURE
PUBLISHER - SEGA
OF PLYRS - 1-8
AVAILABLE - MAY/U.S.

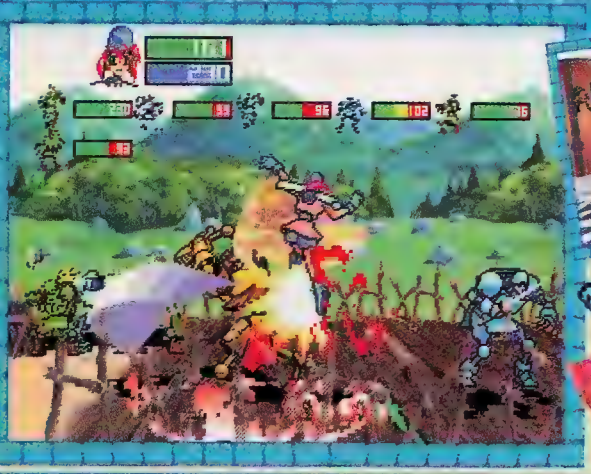
R REVIEW

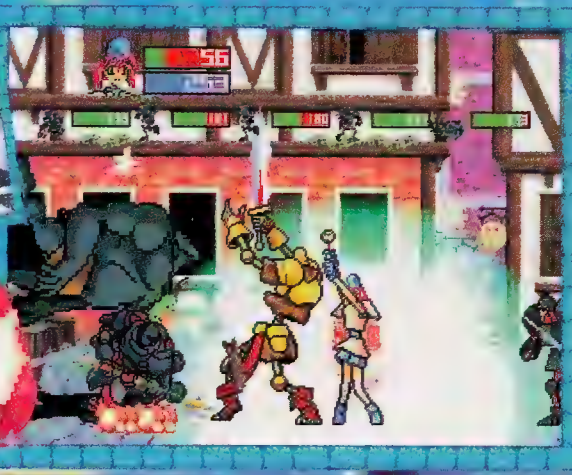
Upon entering the graveyard, Han is struck by a devastating bolt of lightning. The legendary sword he stole during his travels is about to be reclaimed by its rightful (but dead) owner. As the undead hero rises from his grave to reclaim his sword, he angrily begins to beat on the Guardian Heroes. Randy, however, quickly learns how to control the skeletal beast and he joins you in your quest. During the game, by pressing X, you can call up the undead one's command menu and direct him four ways.

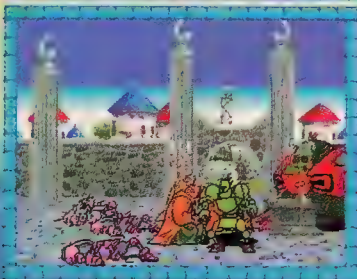
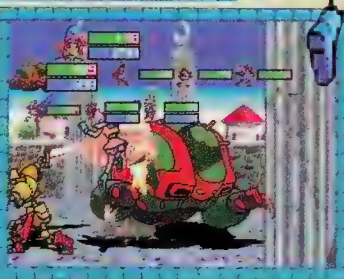
After defeating the enemy here, you must choose from three possible destinations which ultimately branch out accordingly to many, many, more. The path shown led to level five, while another takes you to level three, and one even further. I have yet to travel all thirty levels in one game. The amount of variables in *GH* is mind-bogglingly vast. Not only are up to five options displayed several times during the game, but the character you are playing may also play a role in the game's outcome.

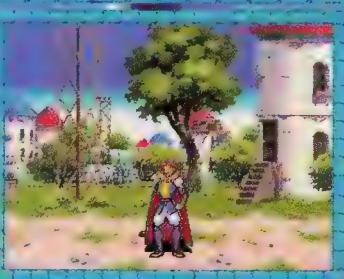



You arrive amidst an ongoing battle in stage five. Try not to kill the knights in green armor. It's better to join forces in this case as there is a BIG giant robo at the end of the level accompanied by the now familiar Zool Fa-lyar. As soon as you approach any of this giant clans of boss, start blocking even before they come into view. Once they begin firing their lasers they can juggle you many times. Wait for an opening and mount your attack.

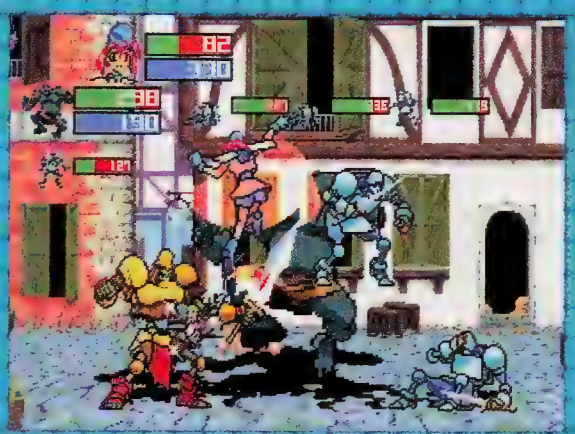




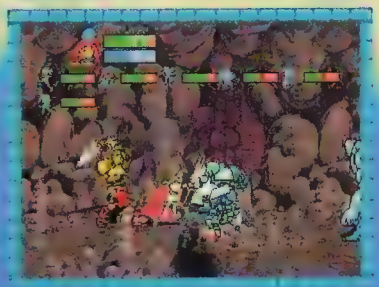
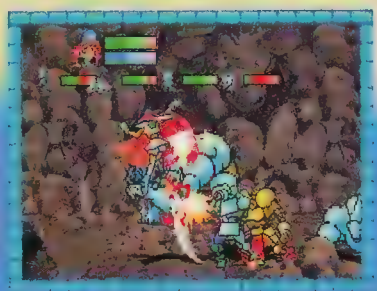
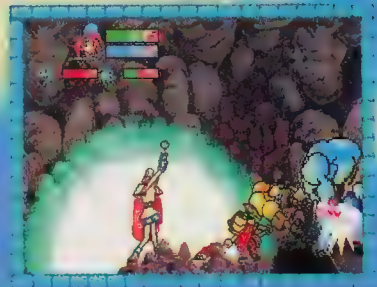
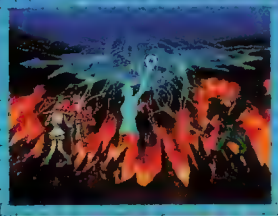


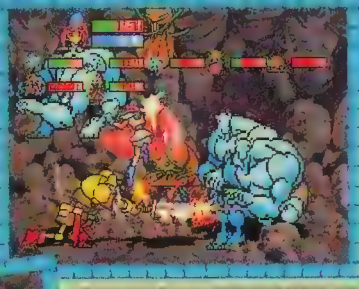
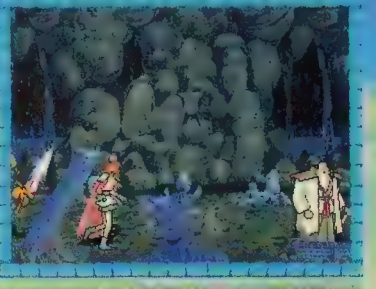
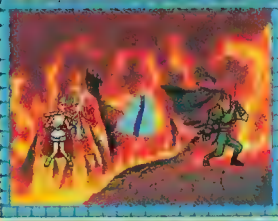
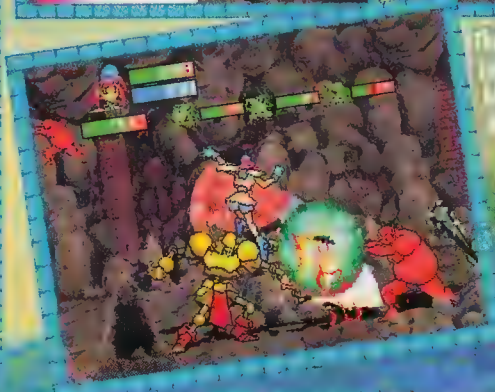
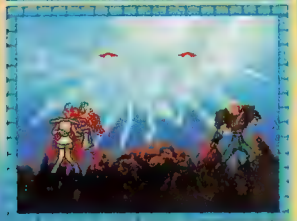
Remember, you're in control of the undead hero. When passing though towns filled with innocent people, command him to harness his sword. If he kills innocent townspeople, bad karma will result, changing the outcome of the quest.

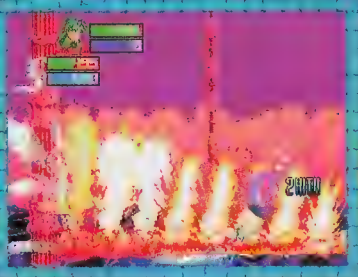
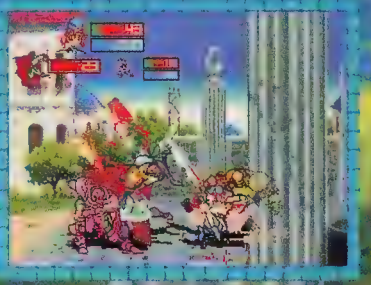


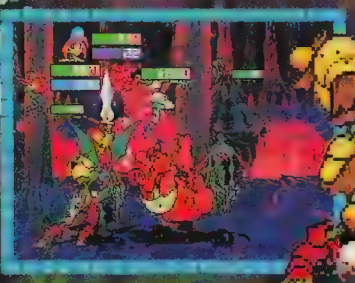
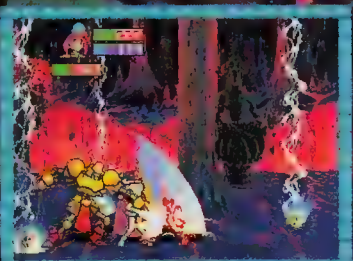
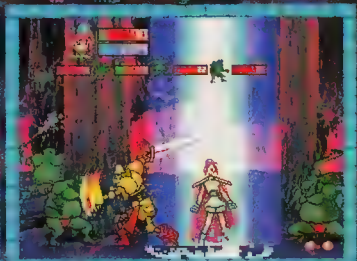
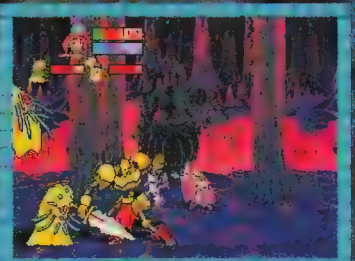
Enemies will attack, tempting you to re-arm your undead friend. If any townspeople wander through the battle, check what plane they're on, and take the fight elsewhere.

At the end of this road, you'll have your first encounter with Reinhart Vulgar. Depending on the situation, he can either be friend, or foe, or both. After attacking you here, he is betrayed by Cannon G. Grey and his wizards. Cannon entombs you in an energy field and takes you on a journey through Heaven and Hell, along the way filling you with his evil wisdom (at least in the import version). Once you return, you will have to make a decision... attempt to kill him, run away, or fight another day. Magic has no effect on Cannon, and he is a ruthless opponent. Run away and you'll pay later...

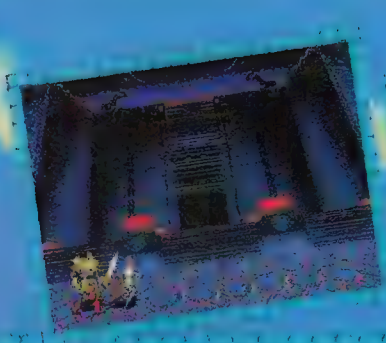





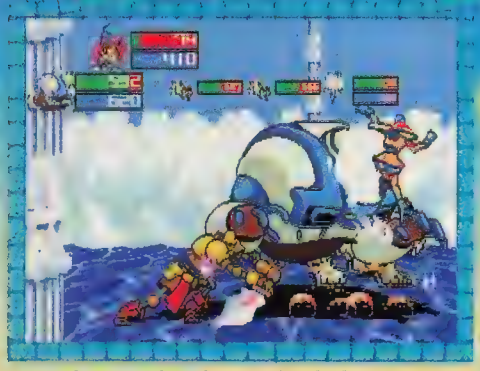
There are five parts to take from Sega CD, and of which will [illegible] this [illegible] game. After fighting your way through hordes of [illegible] Magma demons and monstrous other [illegible], you'll [illegible] Ma-ya-in and you may end up in [illegible].

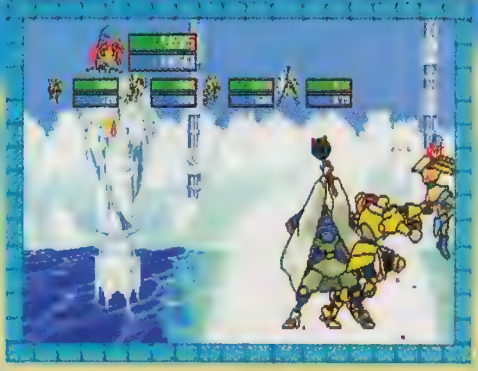
The easiest way to see every level *Guardian He* [illegible] through your first time, avoiding the heavier battle[illegible]. After [illegible] on normal once, you'll gain access to Selena, who is just [illegible].

For the record, even though our CD came from Sega of America it was [illegible] in its Japanese form. The names of the characters will most likely [illegible] to more fitting American fare like Chad Strong and the such.

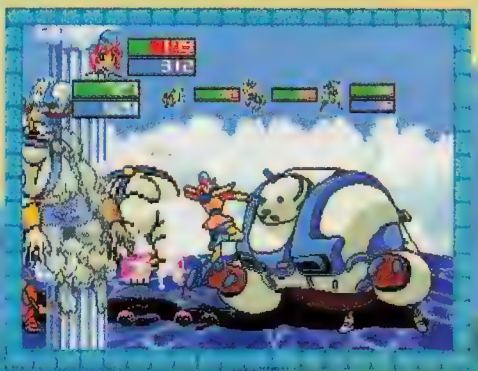
One look at the American box art is enough to make you head for the nearest bathroom, so I think it's safe to assume that *GH* will get the usual US treatment. Sure would be nice if Treasure's beautiful art they spent months creating actually got seen over here, but as we all know, we're just not ready for it. Even with the receptacle-bound art, *Guardian Heroes* should be played by each and every Saturn user. It's not only a testament to the system's 2-D power, but a true revelation in the side-scroll action fighting category. Treasure has done frighteningly well on their first Saturn title. I only hope that *Guardian Heroes* gets the attention it deserves. If it's reviewed elsewhere as a "*Final Fight* clone," it's because the reviewer either didn't play long enough, can't read, or just plain sucks. Hopefully, that won't happen... yeah, right. -E. Storm

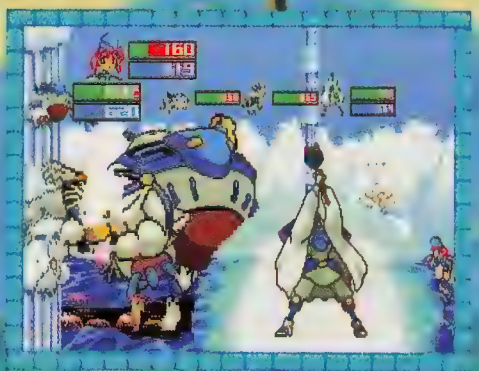




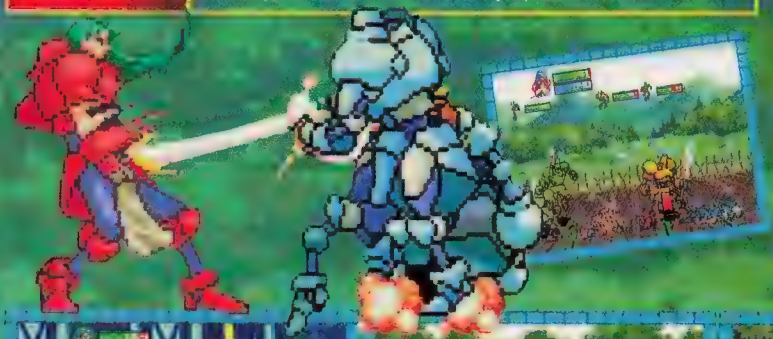


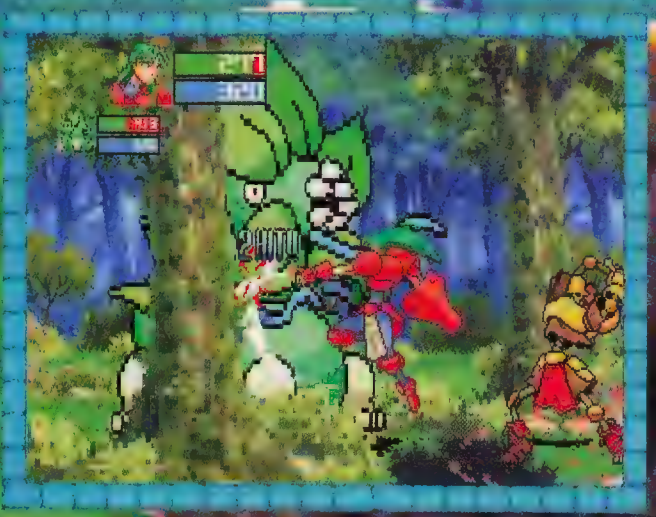
What, you thought I was finished? No way. These intense shots from a later level oughta convince anyone with a pulse that *GH* kicks butt in a big way. Actually, our *Iron Rain* CD wouldn't boot up, so I've got some extra space to fill. You'll see Game arts' *IR* (*Gun Griffon*) next ish.

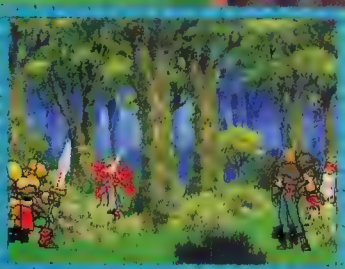


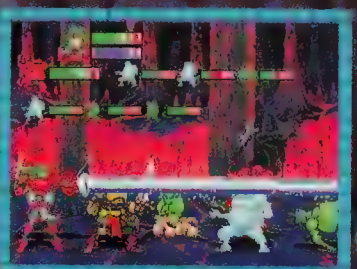


PLAY AS SELENA!
After beating *Guardian Heroes* the first time, you can choose Selena. She's by far the strongest character, and can juggle opponents indefinitely. Depending on which path you choose and character you select (there are hundreds of combinations), each time you beat the game, you'll earn the right to control your fallen foes in the six-player vs. mode!... FIGHT!









...beast below and left is one of the milder last bosses. The real one produces special effects you simply won't believe. This insane boss is best left for you. Come to think of it, you *Gunstar Heroes* fans may recognize him... In the ending below and right, the undead hero doesn't return to the grave! It looks like Reinhart jumped in and saved him at the last minute. I can't wait to *read* this game. I hope it gets an accurate translation.

Here, in one of many endings possible, the soul of the undead hero is saved by the thought-to-be-slain Reinhart Vulgar. Each is followed by a different scrolling portrait in contrast to the outcome, which depends on you. Exactly how many endings are there?... I intend to find out.

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - TEAM ANDROMEDA
PUBLISHER - SEGA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - MAY

TAKUHI
The Perfect Synthesis of Chicken & Fish

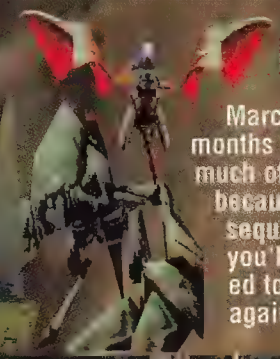
PANZER DRAGOON II zwei

The first releases of the new 32-bit platforms brought lots of quantity games, but very little in the way of innovation. You get fighting games... in 3-D! Driving games... in 3-D! Action-platform games... in 3-D! Not that I have anything against classic genres being done better, but I wanted something new, something *innovative*. That's why *Panzer Dragoon* stands as my single favorite title of 32-bit's first year. Sure, it's been beaten in terms of graphics many times, but it was actually something new. Anyone who says it's just another first-person shooter hasn't really played it.

Even more than that, Sega poured time and money into giving *Panzer* a mood and feel unlike any other: the insane organic technology of the enemies, the oddly exotic settings, the brilliantly unconventional soundtrack, and a story and quest that gave the game an almost dream-like flow. It was a masterpiece. But, as it turns out, it was only the beginning.

All the things that made *Panzer Dragoon* great are back in the sequel (except for the music), but it'll be a while before *this* one's beaten in terms of graphics. The increase in graphic quality is astounding... The original *Panzer*, which blew me away less than a year ago, now looks laughably bad in comparison. The new levels all have a great deal of variety in terms of backgrounds, and have almost no perceptible pop-up. Enemies and sprites are smoother and even better animated, and come much closer to you than they ever dared before. The programmers actually thought of a few ways to use the Saturn's 2-D prowess to create better 3-D, and as a result, level 3's forest (in which you're flanked by parallax on both sides) is one of the most impressive scenes in the game. And some of the effects, like the water in level 4, are unbelievable. Not only does the water flow and sparkle realistically, but you can see a perfect wavy, murky image of the Sea Chicken boss when he's underwater, and an equally perfect *reflection* when he's above it. Speaking of which, that boss conflict (pictured all around this text) has got to be one of the most impressive scenes in video game history... And I don't even *want* to talk about how cool the last boss is.

Our version wasn't quite finished, so we're not sure exactly how Team Andromeda will implement the game's new multi-path levels and dragon maturation system, but the variety in both areas is definitely welcome (see the following pages for details). The other new addition this time around is the "Berserk" feature, a special bar that increases as you kill your foes. At the press of a button, your dragon unloads all of this pent-up anger, by rapidly locking and firing its lasers at just about anything that moves. The only disappointment is in the music... It's still pretty good, but it's all PCM, and isn't by Yoshitaka Azuma, *Panzer 1*'s composer. Still, the new guy's clearly studied his predecessor, and the new soundtrack upholds the mood quite well.



Panzer hits Japan in March, and here only two months later. Until then, play as much of *Panzer 1* as you can, because once you've seen the sequel, I have a feeling that you'll probably never be tempted to even touch the original again. -Takuhi

The most frequently heard complaint about the original *Panzer Dragoon* was that it was on tracks; you could fly around freely, but only on a preset course. Though *Panzer 2* has yet to achieve total freedom of movement, levels 2-4 (and possibly more) each have at least one fork, with totally different backgrounds, and enemies in levels 2 and 4, and different mini-bosses in level 3. We'll have to wait till the final version to see if Sega expands on this further.

Multiple Paths!

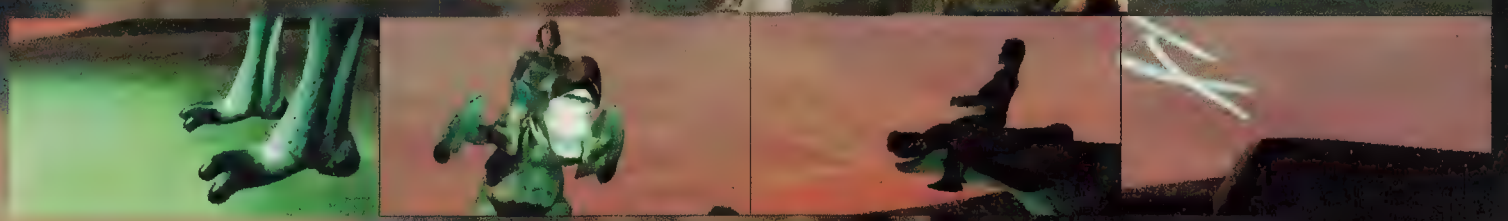
Episode 3

Episode 4

Six Different Dragons!

Depending on which paths you choose as you play through *Panzer 2*, your dragon matures in different ways. Ultimately, there are six different kinds, all with different main weapons, life bars, and speeds. The ultimate dragon seems to be the war-horse pictured above, but by cheating and using the built-in dragon select that was in our beta copy, we were able to get a powerful, blue flat-tailed dragon that was unattainable through conventional means. Hmmm...

The mysterious fish-tailed dragon.



SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - AWKY TEAM
PUBLISHED - SEGA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE
AVAILABLE - APRIL

BRING BANANAS

CONGO

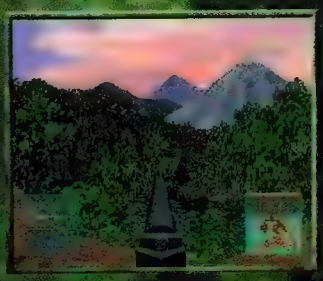
WE ARE... WATCHING YOU!

COULD SEGA'S VERSION OF CONGO BE BETTER THAN PARAMOUNT'S?... EASILY!

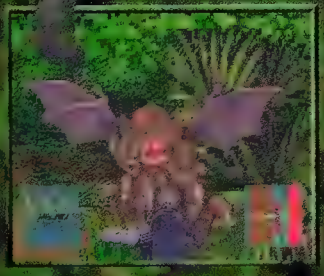
While that's not saying much (the movie was a turd) Sega's *Congo*, a game I was seriously worried about after watching Ernie Hudson fumble about with a bunch of would be bananas and a talking gorilla, is actually shaping up to be a very good and somewhat unique 3-D adventure.

Luckily for everyone involved, *Congo* the game is not based on the movie. Rather, it takes place after an expedition has already been lost to the mad apes, with you playing the sole survivor. A very sick sole survivor. So sick, in fact, that your vision often sways, producing a liquid effect to the graphics throughout much of the early levels.

You'll have to find diamonds to earn cargo drops, arm yourself with several high powered weapons, find medicine, and survive jungle fever just to find the lost city of Zinj. That is, when you're not splattering the mutated inhabitants that thrive in the Congo. Giant spiders, vicious apes, huge wasps, carnivorous



chameleons, and other such mutated beasts are a constant nuisance. The 3-D gameplay, however, is really the star of the show. Lush greenery surrounds you as you negotiate huge maps, with nicely shaded polygon highlights sprinkled generously throughout each level. Play mechanics include strafing, jumping, running, and useful 180 degree autoturns. The depth is pretty amazing and there's generous



parallax in every level.

Realizing *Congo* is not 100% tweaked, I did get rather frustrated, well, very frustrated, by the constant reversing of the controls intermittently through the first few areas. Having to constantly adjust to backwards commands at key moments seemed a bit excessive. Turning around manually seems a bit drawn out as well. Otherwise, I have nothing but high hopes for *Congo*. It's not a Doom clone, has some inventive special effects (earthquakes rock the entire playfield in Zinj) and as I said possesses an impressive 3-D engine. The final touches are going to make or break this one, so join me next month for the last word on Sega's *Congo*. -E. Storm

REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

NIGHT WARRIORS

DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - MAY

TAKUMI
An excellent conversion of an excellent game.

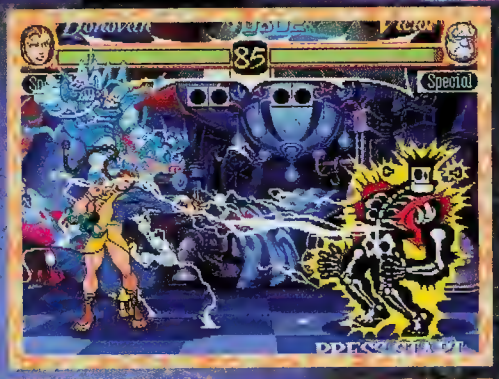
One of the greatest mysteries in recent arcade history is why *Night Warriors* never came out here. I mean, *Darkstalkers* was pretty [illegible], and *Night Warriors* was a more than worthy upgrade... Capcom even made up a new name, new logo, new cabinet... but it never even made it out of location test. Luckily, none of this has has stopped Capcom from releasing it for the U.S. Saturn, and we can all finally play one of Capcom's best fighters to date.

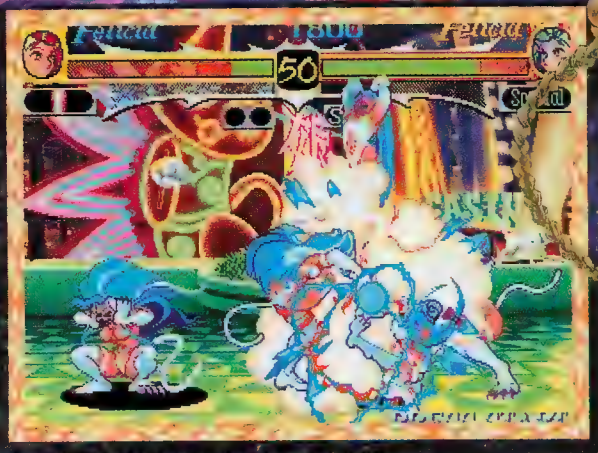
Night Warriors adds two new characters to the *Darkstalkers* world, allows you to play the two bosses, tosses in a bunch of new supers and play mechanics twists, and has new music and a few new backgrounds. All in all, it's a much more balanced and polished game than the original. But if you haven't even played *Darkstalkers* (a game that didn't get nearly the distribution it deserved), you have no idea what you're missing... The *Vampire/Darkstalkers/Vampire Hunter/Night Warriors* series is a lot more than just a *Street Fighter* rehash.

The animation is incredible, quite possibly the best animation on a home fighting game ever... Its only possible competition would be Neo•CD *Samurai Shodown III*, but the Neo has 3-4 times as much RAM. Bearing that in mind, the quality that Capcom managed to squeeze into the Saturn's 2? is even more impressive. And the level of detail is sensational... This is the type of game you want to be constantly pausing as you play, 'cause you never know what Capcom's hidden in each of the hundreds of animation frames that whiz by too fast to be distinguished. If you're paying attention, you can see all sort of cool things, like the way Lord Raptor talks to boys with Asian-ko when their match begins, or the human face in the weird mucky of his lower left arm.

The play is [illegible] Capcom. Most of the concepts are ones we've all [illegible] with by now, but the supers are done particularly well, and there are a few new twists, like guard reversals and the ability to hit enemies while they're down. As always, the standard Saturn pad is a joy to use, and the game's control will quickly become second nature.

In the translation department, *Night Warriors* is [illegible]. As I said before, the animation is just stunning. While it's not technically perfect (there are frames missing here and



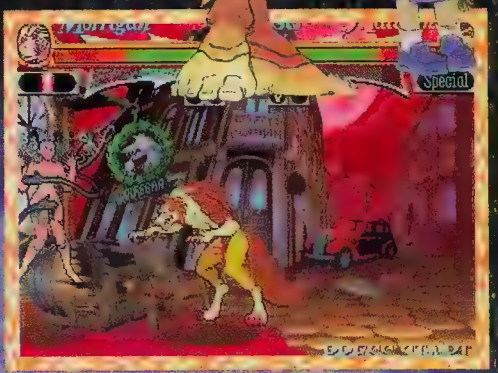


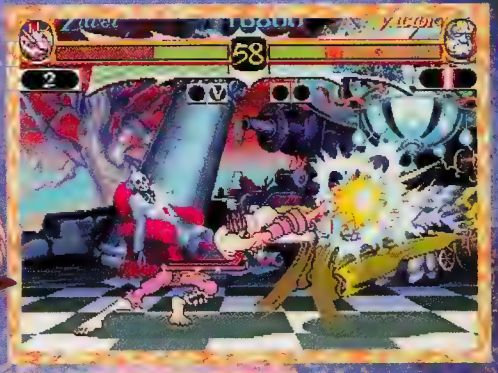
there), it's a lot better than I expected it to be, especially after the heavy cuts that were made in *X-Men*. You can't imagine how relieved I was the first time I saw Pyron's standing animation... every little frame perfect.

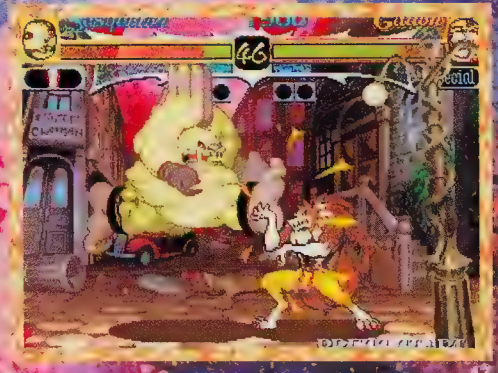
But while Capcom managed to do an excellent job of squeezing the coin-op onto the CD (and with surprisingly little loading time), they certainly didn't aim to do too much more than that. *Night Warriors* has no arranged soundtrack, something I'd expect in a CD conversion these days, and the many cool options found in *Alpha* are nowhere to be found (of course, the usual turbo speed select, difficulty modes, and vs. mode are present). This is the arcade, and not too much more.

But hey, when you have a nearly perfect conversion of an excellent (and nearly impossible to find) Capcom coin-op on your Saturn, you're probably not going to quibble over the soundtrack. *Night Warriors* is an amazing translation, and a big improvement over *X-Men*. If you have even a slight interest in fighting games, this is a Saturn exclusive you must own. -Takuhi

DONOVAN







HSIEN-KO

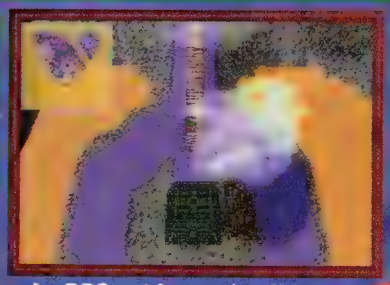
3DO ZONE

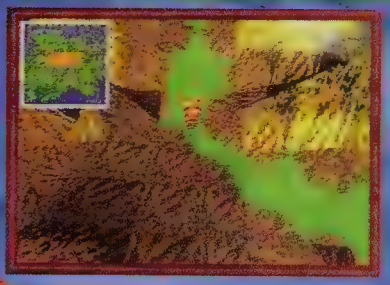
REVIEW

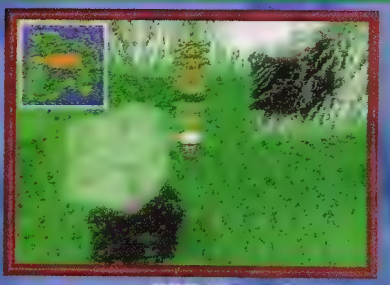
3DO

DEVELOPER - MICROCABIN
PUBLISHER - PANASONIC
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - BEGINNER
AVAILABLE - MARCH

ORION
POSSIBLY THE BEST 3DO GAME EVER.



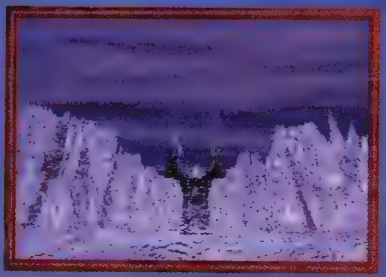


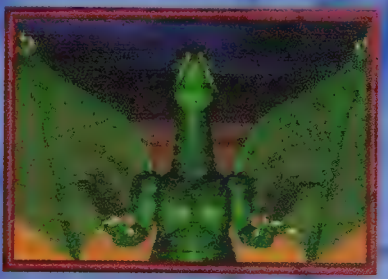


Lucienne's Quest

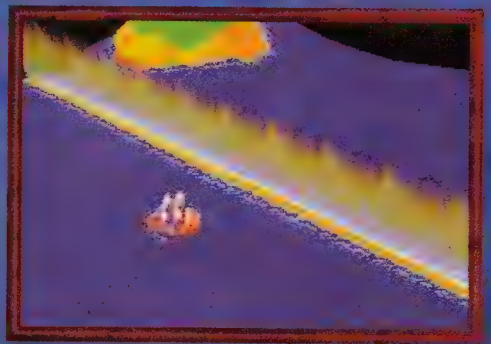
An RPG set in a splendid 3-D polygon world, complete with a refreshingly "light" storyline, tons of areas to explore, and having some of the best RPG music ever, all on my 3DO?? I know, it sounds crazy. Thanks to MicroCabin, my opinion of the 3DO just took a turn for the better.

If you read Takuhi's review of *Sword and Sorcery* (the Japanese version of *Lucienne's Quest*) in the February issue of GF, you'll notice the game sounds like it has a simple, but fun quest. Taking the role of Lucienne (a young sorcerer's apprentice), you're thrust into a light-hearted adventure when you decide to help a man who seeks your absent master's aid. The quest system here is set up like any other RPG (the only way to achieve the main goal is by completing many smaller missions along the way), but the problem is, Lucienne begins to accept each new quest without any personal reason ("There's a bad man in that castle? SURE, we'll kill him!"). While this in itself isn't a big deal, just add the often childish dialogue found throughout the game's translation into the mix, and the impression is given that *Lucienne's Quest* was made for people who've never played RPG's before and wouldn't mind the absence of a deep, involving story line. It's also worth mentioning that Lucienne is

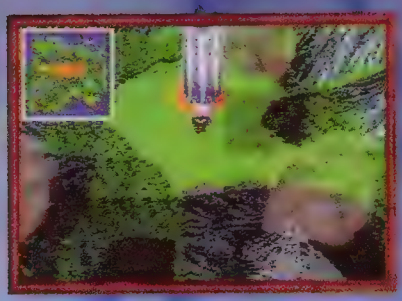
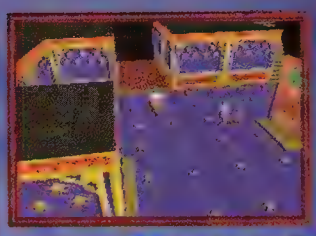
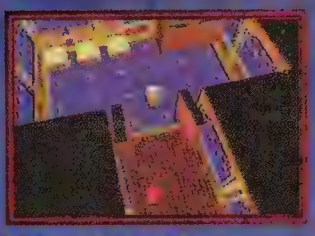
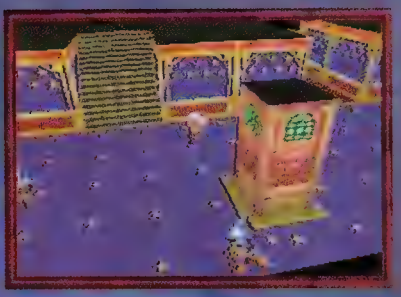




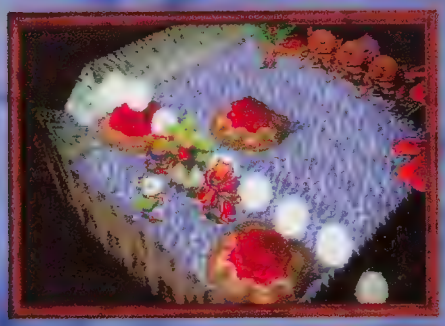
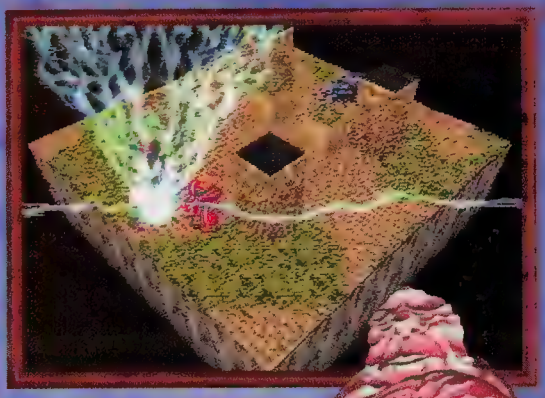
Lucienne



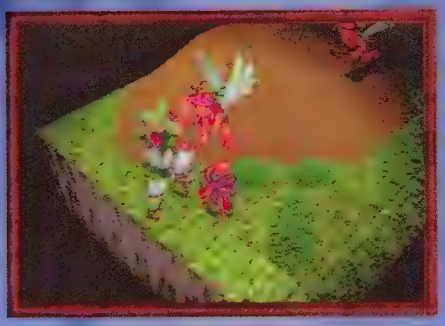
Be-O-Melda

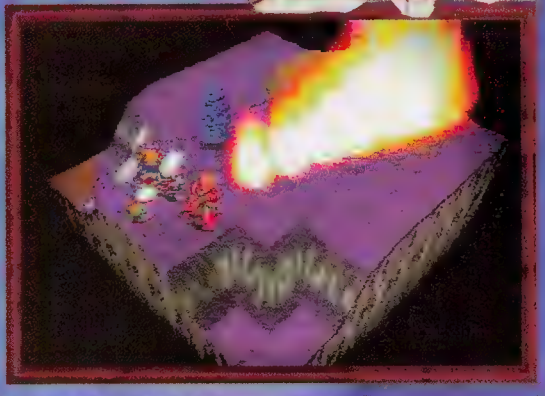
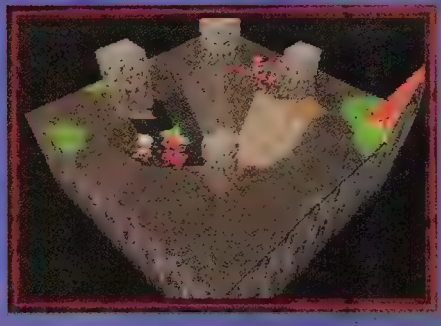





Tower of Pinakoteik

Spectacular Battle Scenes

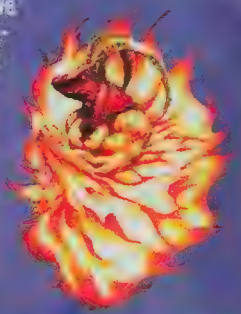


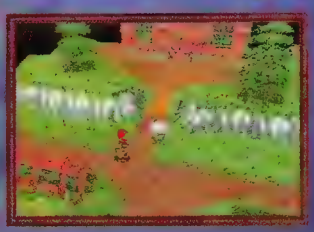
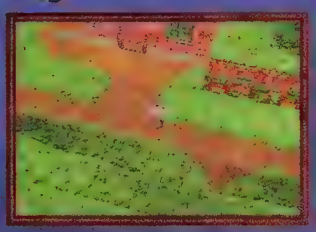
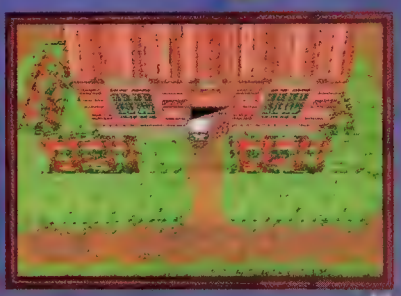
portrayed in this version as a very stupid little girl, unlike the leopard where she is more arrogant and mischievous. I mean, it's not very inspiring to have your main character forget why she's on a quest every time someone asks.

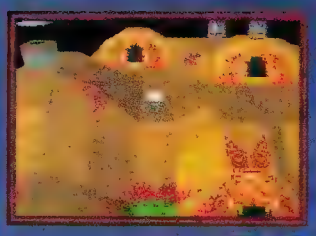
Lucienne's Quest must be seen in motion to fully understand the unknown power the 3DO apparently holds. What's with all this polygon force? Sure, it's a tad frumpy and has a bit of pop-up, but that won't even register when viewing every texture-mapped shape scale in and out as you move around. And actually,

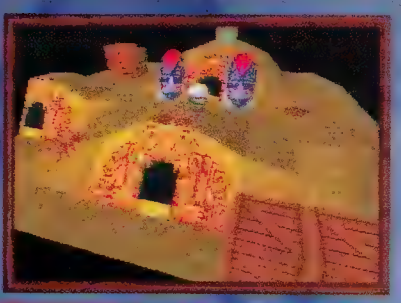
unlike the much touted *Beyond the Beyond*, polygons were used to make up nearly everything in the game. From the large and sometimes multi-leveled towns to even the smallest features, like pools of water constantly in motion, almost nothing was left untouched. That fact, combined with little details such as how it turns from day to night while you walk around the world map in "real time" (actually changing the gameplay as one of your characters turns into a werewolf when darkness falls), makes *Lucienne's Quest* one of the best looking RPG's I've ever seen.



Colony

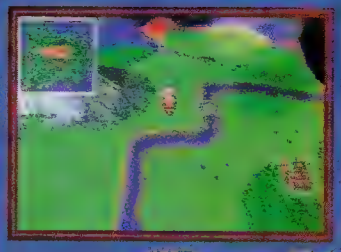


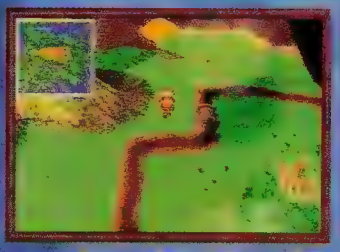


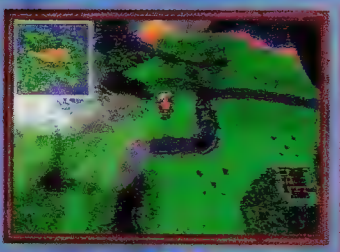
Babachop

Landscapes

Age (Day)



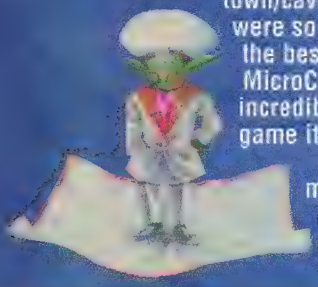




Age (Night)

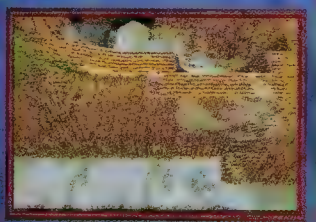
Time Changing in the Overworld

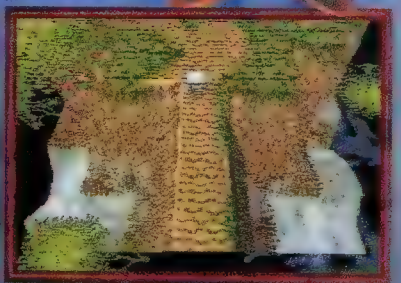
Not only looking good, *Lucienne's Quest* is also blessed with an amazing soundtrack. Let's put it this way: In how many other RPG's have you ever felt bad leaving that town/cave/castle only because the tunes were so godly? The music here is some of the best around, as once again MicroCabin has created a soundtrack so incredible, it's almost too good for the game it represents.

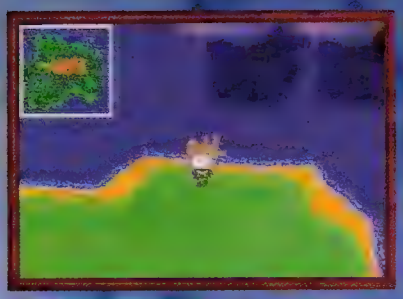
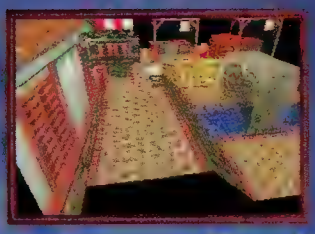


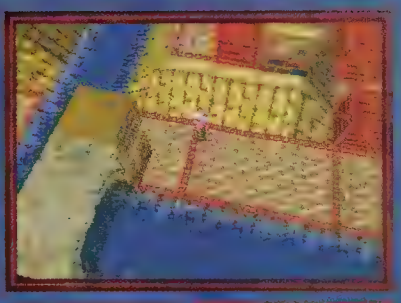
Not satisfied with the current menu-driven battle system found in most RPG's today, MicroCabin improved on the basic idea by scattering "obstacles" around the battlefields. Adding a strategic element to the basic battles, these obstacles can be used to your advantage by hiding behind them (you're given a small space to move your character around before giving a command), or they can be destroyed to open the way to the enemy. The magic used here is the standard RPG fare (healing spells, fireballs, etc.), but they're displayed here in great graphic detail, some going to the point of actually altering the texture-mapped battlefields with polygon earthquakes and such. And the best part is, even though the attacks on the world map are the standard random surprises.

Hole of Grub





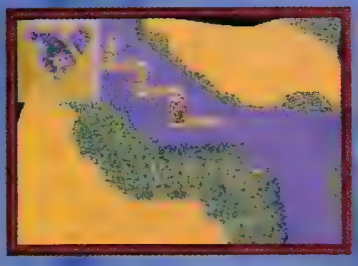
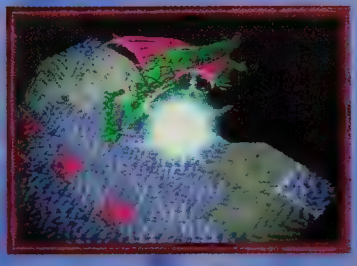
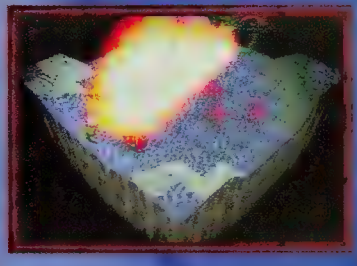
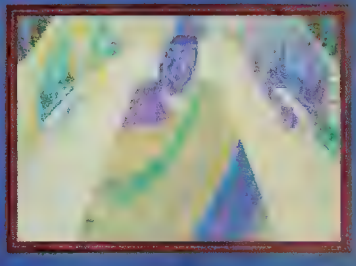



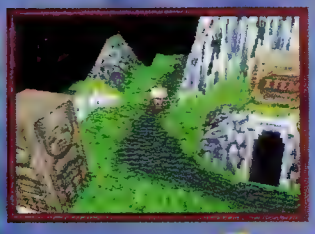


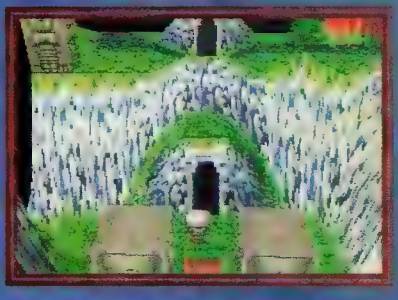
Crackenburg

Mininaga

Kaneyung



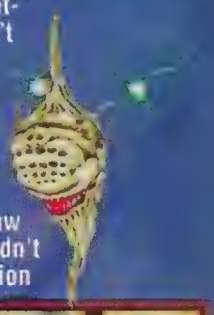


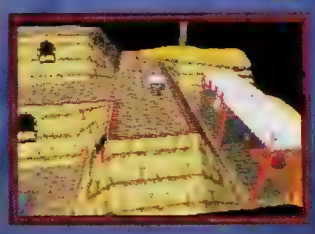
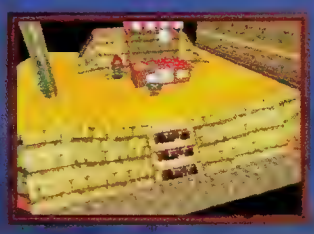
Las Aldus

fights in caves (or buildings) are always in predetermined spots, allowing you to explore without fear.

With at least three huge realms to explore (including one in an alternate dimension), over twenty towns and other major locations to visit, and four other party members to find (or create), *Lucienne's Quest* should take you a good 10 hours to beat. Sound like a small completion time for a game that seems to be so vast? The reason why is simple: This is the most balanced RPG I've ever played, and that's not always a good thing. Gone are the days of fighting random enemies to level up so you can beat that impossible boss. In *LQ* you increase levels every other fight. Actually, it's very possible to beat the game without ever dying once, thanks to an option that restores all your life energy anywhere on the world map. Of course, while this adds to the fun of never getting stuck, the lack of any true challenge can't be ignored.

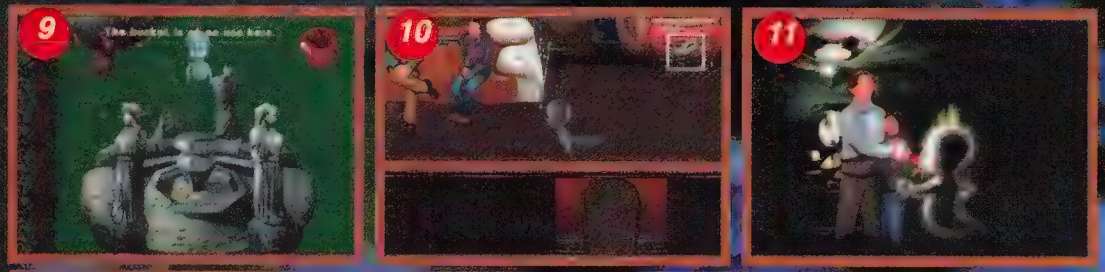
Well, I'm impressed. I've played a very enjoyable RPG on the last system I'd expect to see one on. And even though *Lucienne's Quest* has many elements that make it sound like a beginner's RPG, there are more than enough features that could draw even the most seasoned player in, and shouldn't be overlooked by anyone owning a 3DO. -Orion



Brass

1. Search chests to find key elements. 2. Suits of armor conceal hidden secrets. 3. Use the ventilation system to move about the many rooms of Whitley. 4. Use chairs for more than just sitting. 5. Toggle switches to open gated rooms and corridors. 6. Find some helpful reading in the study. 7. Visit the garden. 8. Pick a rose for Kat. 9. You still can't use the bucket! 10. Bring the rose and finished portrait to Kat and the Doc. 11. Sit back and watch the story unfold.



PREVIEW

3DO

DEVELOPER - INTERPLAY

PUBLISHER - INTERPLAY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - N/A

AVAILABLE APRIL

CASPER'S ONE OF THE BEST CINEMA PORTS EVER.

CASPER

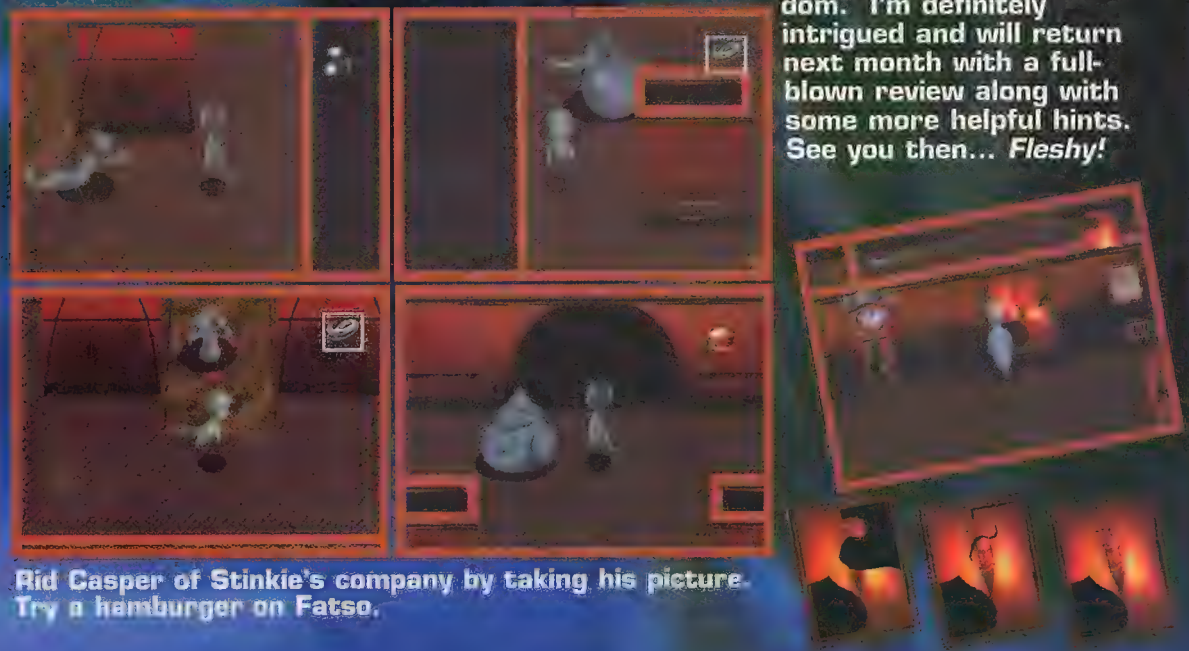
What you're looking at is one of the best things that's happened to the 3DO this year. *Casper* is one of the few games that I've played, especially in the adventure/role playing genre, that I can confidently say will appeal to both kids and adults alike. The appeal for younger gamers is of course harnessed within the splendid graphics which easily challenge any 3DO game to date, while the adult player will find the puzzle-solving and interesting mixture of gameplay elements intriguing.

As Casper, it is your job to successfully blend with the fleshy's, assemble the Lazarus machine, your late father's magical re-animation device, and fend off your fellow (but very unfriendly) ghosts, Fatso, Stretch, and Stinkie. I'm actually only a couple of hours into Casper and that's what I've been able to do so far. I believe this game's got legs... long legs.

Being that this is Casper, the friendly ghost, the friendliest ghost

Now that Casper has made fleshie friends, he might get some fancy ideas about becoming a fleshie himself..
Who will clean up our stuff then?
Yeah, and who will cook for us?

you know, I was expecting a simple, and utterly adorable adventure that I'd race right through. Imagine my surprise as I became totally perplexed while negotiating the huge mansion, in search of countless clues to perform each seemingly simple task. All the while quality sounds and effects abound, along with zero boredom. I'm definitely intrigued and will return next month with a full-blown review along with some more helpful hints. See you then... *Fleshy!*



Rid Casper of Stinkie's company by taking his picture. Try a hamburger on Fatso.

Doom, ID Software's first person masterpiece, has finally migrated over to the 3DO. Unfortunately, this game was probably better off staying at home, or on the PC, the PlayStation, the SNES; anywhere else but the 3DO. Can the 3DO version of this game really be all that bad? It can, and is. Let me explain...

REVIEW

DOOM

3DO

DEVELOPER - ART DATA
PUBLISHER - ART DATA
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW

K LEE
ENOUGH BROWN FOR YA?

By far, the most annoying aspect of this game is the horrendously slow frame rate. The size of the play screen is configurable to your liking (the smaller the screen, the faster the frame rate). But even the smallest, fastest screen is still unacceptable from a pure gameplay standpoint. If three or more enemies simultaneously populate the screen (which, in *Doom*, is often the case), the game doesn't just slow down, it screeches to a near halt.

Adding insult to injury is the fact that the frame rate is so jerky at times, it becomes difficult to aim your weapon (remember, this is the "smoothest" screen mode we're talking about here), hindering the playability of the game severely. If you're crazy enough to play *Doom* in the full-screen mode (via a code), then you can enjoy a screen update rate of 7 frames per second... Yes, you heard me correctly, ONLY SEVEN FRAMES PER SECOND (What is this, *MYST* or *DOOM*?).

So, are the glitches and gameplay problems in this game just a by-product of the 3DO's graphic inabilities? I don't think so. *Killing*

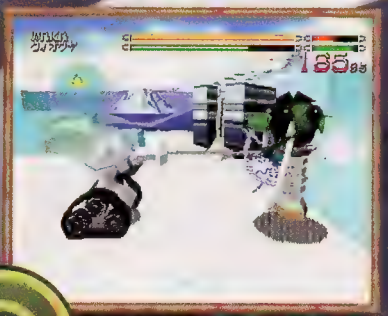
CHOPPY DEATH... IN FOUR SIZES!

Time and *PO'ed* both had full-screen graphics, acceptable frame rates, and, arguably, even more complex graphics than this version of *Doom*. Plus, keep in mind, *Killing Time* and *PO'ed* were created from scratch, whereas *Doom* has been done many times before. It's not as if porting *Doom* over to a different system is some monumental task... Oh well.

Plain and simple, this version of *Doom* is one you should stay far, far away from. If, on one hand, you're looking for an enjoyable and playable version of *Doom*, get a PlayStation version, a PC version, a SNES version, get anything else, but please, spare yourself the hemorrhaging pain of this 3DO version. If, on the other hand, you just want to play a decent first-person shooter on your 3DO, *Killing Time* and/or *PO'ed* make much better choices. I just can't recommend this game in any way. It doesn't really do the *Doom* name any justice. -K. Lee

GEN-32 JAPAN SOFT

ROBO PIT



REVIEW

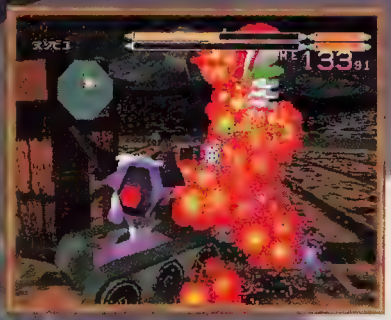
SEGA SATURN

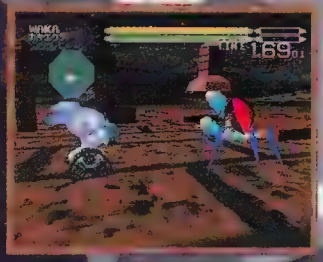
DEVELOPER - ALTRON
PUBLISHER - ALTRON
FORMAT - CD
OF PLAYERS - 1-2
DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE
AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

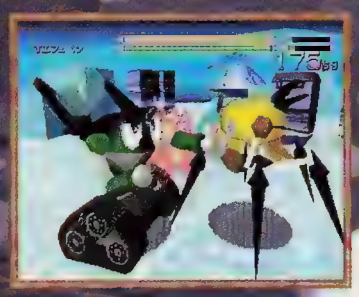
I never thought I'd ever see it: a game that looks much better on the Saturn than it does on the PlayStation, despite its lower polygon abilities. After reviewing *Robo Pit* on Sony's system last month, I was shuddering to think what this version would look like. As we all know, the Saturn can't manipulate polygons the way the PlayStation can... At least, that's what I thought.

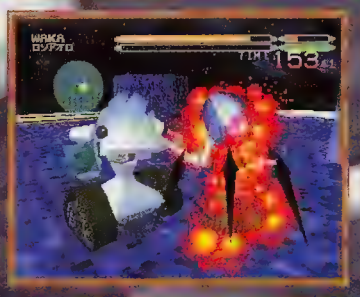
Game-wise, nothing's really changed from the *Robo Pit* we showed you last issue. You can still make thousands of robots using the many parts available upon starting, or by "winning" new weapons from fallen competitors. Overall, there are tons of legs, bodies, and arms to chose from, giving you the means to create anything your imagination can devise. Use your unique robot to fight through 100 other equally strange opponents, and climb your way to the top of the fighting circuit. It won't be easy though, the later robots are extremely skilled, and the specially armed bosses will try their best to slow your progress down.

Sadly, the gouraud shading from the PlayStation version is gone. But, with the cleaner



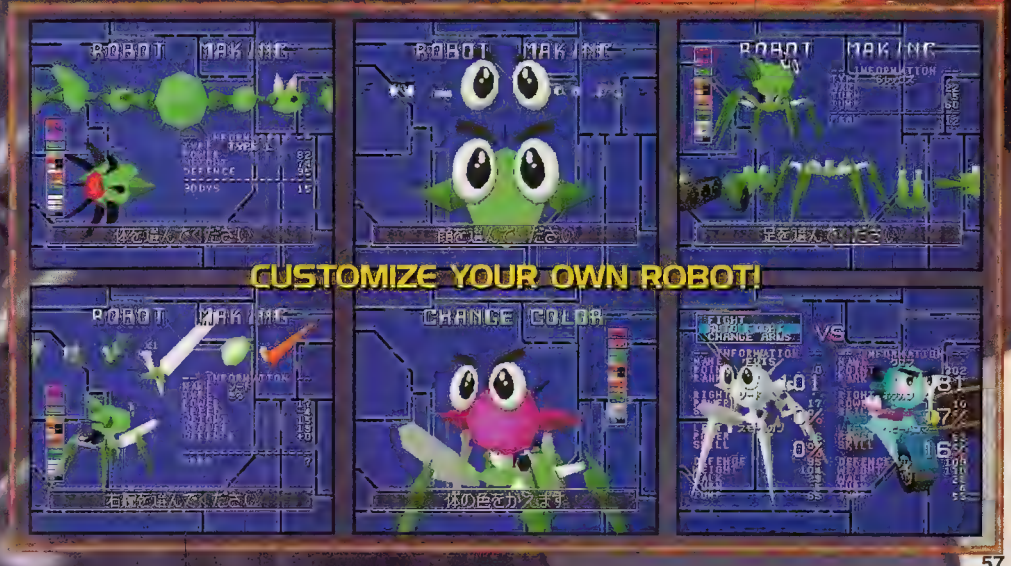






graphics, smoother animation, and deeper sense of 3-D this version offers, you won't hear me complaining. Everything looks better, from the robot creation screen to the battle arenas themselves. Each of these stages still have their strategic elements (rocks to hide behind, raised platforms for quick escapes, etc.), and weapons to use (pillars, trees, and the such can be picked up and thrown), but seem to be packed with more color. In fact, the only bad thing I found with this game was the fighter's poor AI in the auto-fight mode. In the PlayStation version, they fought without mercy, here they just seem to enjoy going in big circles. Oh well, we can't have everything, I guess...

All in all, *Robo Pit* is a great game, if for no other reason than it almost never gets boring. With the amount of robots you can make (all majorly changing the gameplay), and a great two player split screen option, there's plenty of replay value. And that fact alone makes it worth checking out. - Orion



POLICENAUTS

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - 2 CD's

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - HARD

AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN

Last year, I reviewed Konami's digital comic *Snatcher* and gave it a perfect score of 100, which, at the time, it undeniably deserved. This leaves me with a slight problem, however... how to score its sequel (or rather, prequel), *Policenauts*.

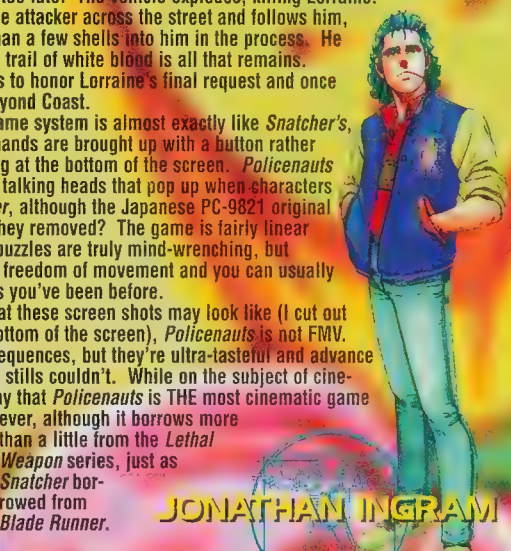
In 2010, mankind's first fully-functional, self-contained space colony, Beyond Coast, is launched. Very small at first, Beyond Coast soon requires a police force. Five of Earth's finest are selected: Joseph Sadaoki Tokugawa from Japan, Ed Brown and Jonathan Ingram from the LAPD, Salvatore Toscanini from New York, and Gates Becker from Scotland Yard. In the media hype that surrounds them, they are dubbed the "Policenauts."

2013. During a test of new deep-space armored suits, Jonathan Ingram's guidance system mysteriously fails and his lifeline rips. He seems lost forever. 25 years later, in 2038, Jonathan's suit is miraculously recovered in deep space, complete with its self-contained cold sleep module. Jonathan is recovered unharmed, physically 28 years old, but in reality 53. He returns to Old Los Angeles on Earth and becomes a private eye. In 2040, his estranged (and now 55 year-old) wife, Lorraine Hojo, visits him from Beyond Coast, claiming that her new husband, Kenzo Hojo, has gone missing. The only clues are a torn leaf, some capsules, and the mysterious word "Plato." Jonathan refuses to take the job, saying that he will never return to Beyond Coast. As Lorraine leaves, Jonathan watches her from his second story office window. He spots tracks leading to the car, and tries to warn her... but it's too late. The vehicle explodes, killing Lorraine.

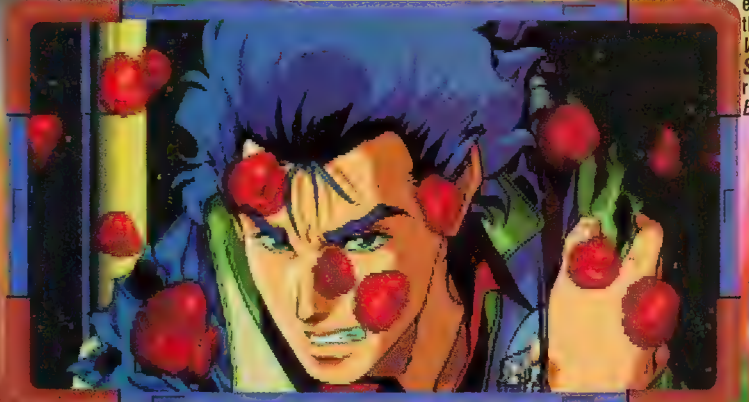
Jonathan sees the attacker across the street and follows him, pumping more than a few shells into him in the process. He gets away, and a trail of white blood is all that remains. Jonathan decides to honor Lorraine's final request and once again goes to Beyond Coast.

Policenauts' game system is almost exactly like *Snatcher's*, except the commands are brought up with a button rather than always being at the bottom of the screen. *Policenauts* doesn't have the talking heads that pop up when characters speak in *Snatcher*, although the Japanese PC-9821 original did. Why were they removed? The game is fairly linear and none of the puzzles are truly mind-wrenching, but there's complete freedom of movement and you can usually go back to places you've been before.

Contrary to what these screen shots may look like (I cut out the text on the bottom of the screen), *Policenauts* is not FMV. There are FMV sequences, but they're ultra-tasteful and advance the story in ways stills couldn't. While on the subject of cinematics, I must say that *Policenauts* is THE most cinematic game ever, although it borrows more than a little from the *Lethal Weapon* series, just as *Snatcher* borrowed from *Blade Runner*.



JONATHAN INGRAM

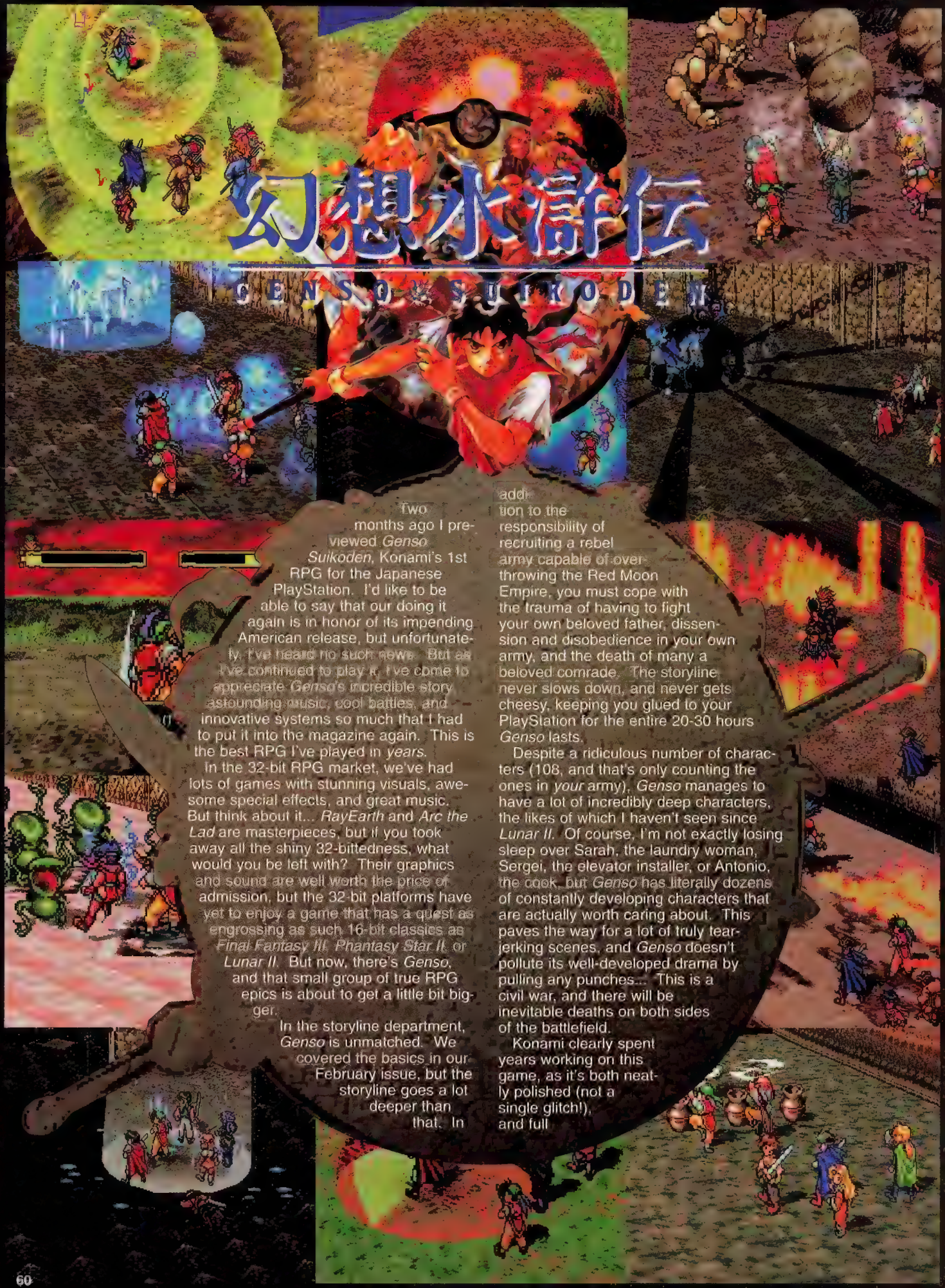


The whole black/white buddy thing is in full force in *Policenauts*, in which you team up with your old partner Ed Brown. Jonathan even looks like Mel Gibson with blue hair... just like Gillian was Harrison Ford. Luckily, the theme and story is about as far from *Lethal Weapon* as you can get. The story unfolds in an ultra-suspenseful manner, with a prologue, seven acts, and an epilogue... The shocking truths keep on coming, and just when you think you've reached the final, ultimate conclusion... you realize that things were much, much worse than you ever imagined.

The graphics are mostly still pictures with slight animation. Some nice lens flares, mist, and sunlight effects have been added to this version (the previous two were on the Japanese PC 9821 and 3DO), and the great amount of lovin' CG and anime cinemas (by AIC, who animated the *Bubblegum Crisis* series) are way cooler than the original version's stills. The sound is typical Konami god. Has Konami EVER done a bad soundtrack? You've got every musical style here from sitar-heavy mood pieces to classical and rock.

Everyone needs to experience *Policenauts*. If sports kings Konami don't bring this out here they must be shot, drawn, and quartered... as well as being forced to overdose on *NARC*. They were brave enough to bring *Snatcher* out here, and it's currently the most sought-after Sega CD game on the Internet. Speaking of that game, there are various references to *Snatcher* that tie the games together; the theme park LucasWorld makes an appearance (LucasLand, in Japan, was in *Snatcher*), Napoleon has a cameo, you can play the *Snatcher* theme song if you examine Kenzo's CD collection in Karen's house, and the character Meryl was a member of Fox Hound, the elite police team that was part of *Snatcher's* back story. At any rate, *Policenauts* for the PlayStation is the best version yet and has what I believe to be the best storyline in any game, ever. A CD called *Policenauts Private Collection* is also available, which has interviews, the making of, looks at the PC and 3DO versions, the entire game script and storyboard, a music test, character design sheets, and other goodies.

– Nick Rox



Two months ago I previewed *Genso Suikoden*, Konami's 1st RPG for the Japanese PlayStation. I'd like to be able to say that our doing it again is in honor of its impending American release, but unfortunately, I've heard no such news. But as I've continued to play it, I've come to appreciate *Genso*'s incredible story, astounding music, cool battles, and innovative systems so much that I had to put it into the magazine again. This is the best RPG I've played in *years*.

In the 32-bit RPG market, we've had lots of games with stunning visuals, awesome special effects, and great music. But think about it... *RayEarth* and *Arc the Lad* are masterpieces, but if you took away all the shiny 32-bittedness, what would you be left with? Their graphics and sound are well worth the price of admission, but the 32-bit platforms have yet to enjoy a game that has a quest as engrossing as such 16-bit classics as *Final Fantasy III*, *Phantasy Star II*, or *Lunar II*. But now, there's *Genso*, and that small group of true RPG epics is about to get a little bit bigger.

In the storyline department, *Genso* is unmatched. We covered the basics in our February issue, but the storyline goes a lot deeper than that. In addition to the responsibility of recruiting a rebel army capable of overthrowing the Red Moon Empire, you must cope with the trauma of having to fight your own beloved father, dissension and disobedience in your own army, and the death of many a beloved comrade. The storyline never slows down, and never gets cheesy, keeping you glued to your PlayStation for the entire 20-30 hours *Genso* lasts.

Despite a ridiculous number of characters (108, and that's only counting the ones in *your* army), *Genso* manages to have a lot of incredibly deep characters, the likes of which I haven't seen since *Lunar II*. Of course, I'm not exactly losing sleep over Sarah, the laundry woman, Sergei, the elevator installer, or Antonio, the cook, but *Genso* has literally dozens of constantly developing characters that are actually worth caring about. This paves the way for a lot of truly tear-jerking scenes, and *Genso* doesn't pollute its well-developed drama by pulling any punches... This is a civil war, and there will be inevitable deaths on both sides of the battlefield.

Konami clearly spent years working on this game, as it's both neatly polished (not a single glitch!), and full

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW - JAPAN

TAKUHI

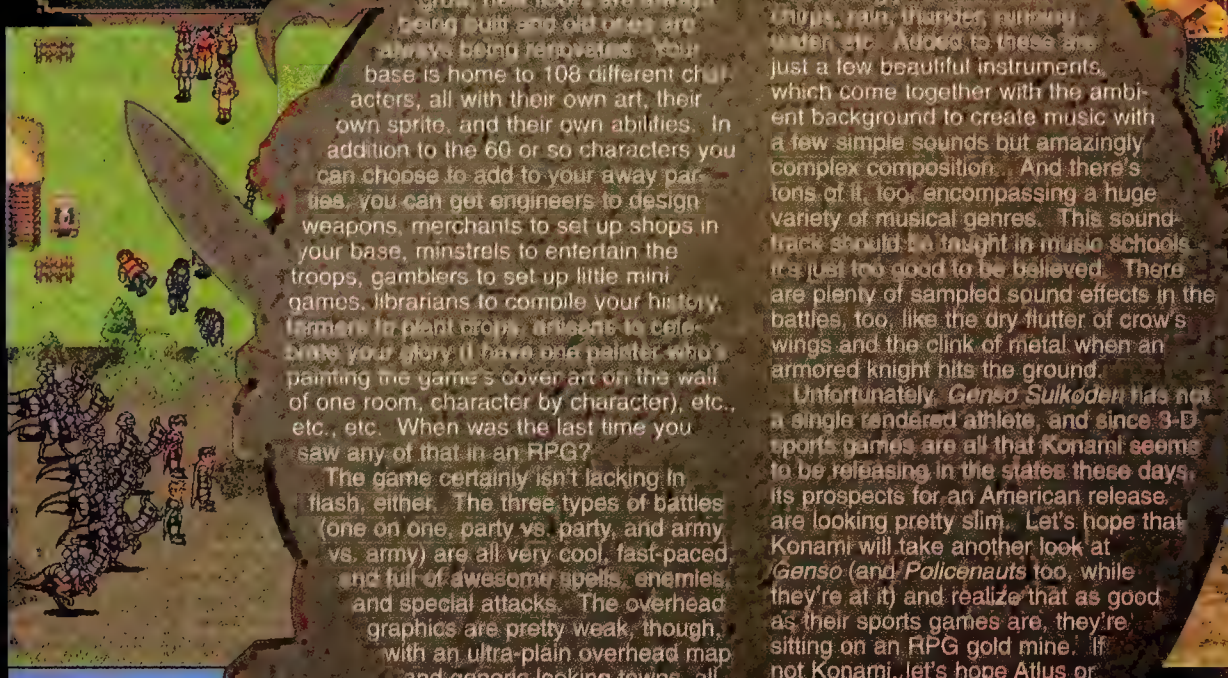
of things, like your rebel army headquarters, for instance. As you progress and your ranks grow, new rooms are always being built and old ones are always being renovated. Your base is home to 108 different characters, all with their own art, their own sprite, and their own abilities. In addition to the 60 or so characters you can choose to add to your away parties, you can get engineers to design weapons, merchants to set up shops in your base, minstrels to entertain the troops, gamblers to set up little mini games, librarians to compile your history, farmers to plant crops, artisans to celebrate your glory (I have one painter who's painting the game's cover art on the wall of one room, character by character), etc., etc., etc. When was the last time you saw any of that in an RPG?

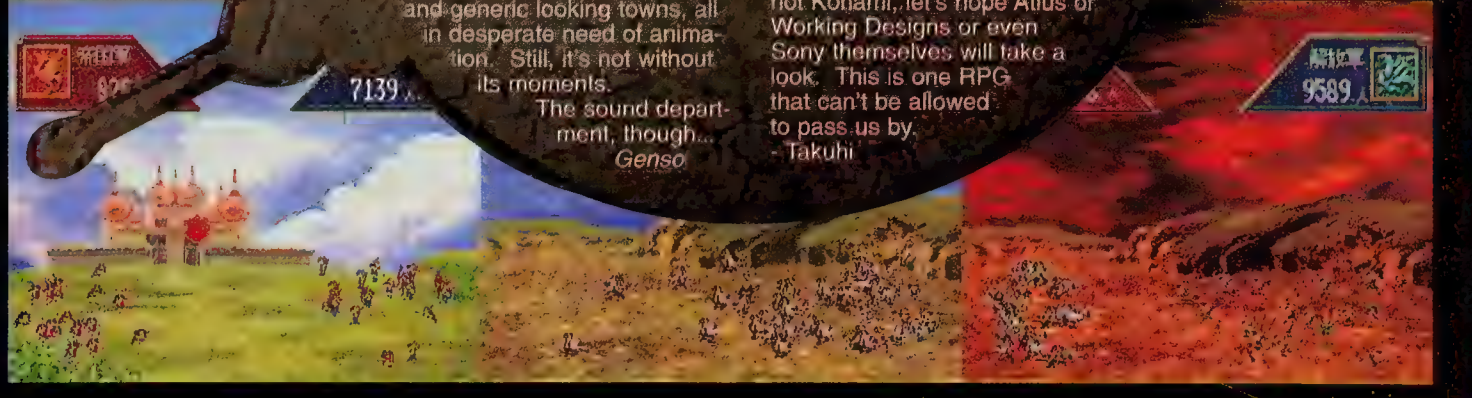
The game certainly isn't lacking in flash, either. The three types of battles (one on one, party vs. party, and army vs. army) are all very cool, fast-paced and full of awesome spells, enemies, and special attacks. The overhead graphics are pretty weak, though, with an ultra-plain overhead map and generic looking towns, all in desperate need of animation. Still, it's not without its moments.

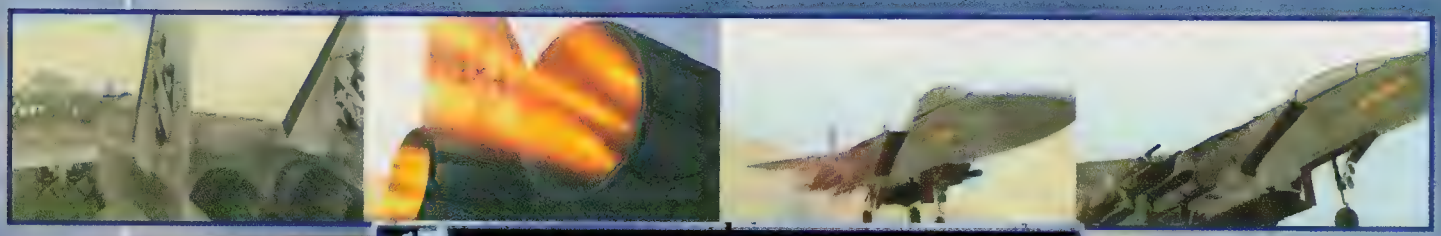
The sound department, though... *Genso Suikoden*'s soundtrack (shiver) is truly astounding. The sample quality is stunning, with astoundingly rendered bird chirps, rain, thunder, running water, etc. Added to these are just a few beautiful instruments, which come together with the ambient background to create music with a few simple sounds but amazingly complex composition. And there's tons of it, too, encompassing a huge variety of musical genres. This soundtrack should be taught in music schools. It's just too good to be believed. There are plenty of sampled sound effects in the battles, too, like the dry flutter of crow's wings and the clink of metal when an armored knight hits the ground.

Unfortunately, *Genso Suikoden* has not a single rendered athlete, and since 3-D sports games are all that Konami seems to be releasing in the states these days, its prospects for an American release are looking pretty slim. Let's hope that Konami will take another look at *Genso* (and *Policenauts* too, while they're at it) and realize that as good as their sports games are, they're sitting on an RPG gold mine. If not Konami, let's hope Atlus or Working Designs or even Sony themselves will take a look. This is one RPG that can't be allowed to pass us by.

- Takuhi







SIDEWINDER

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - PEGASUS

PUBLISHER - ASMIK

FORMAT - CD

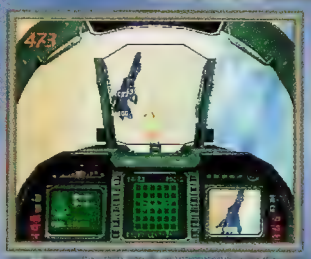
OF PLAYERS - 1/LINK

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

ORION
A STEP ABOVE AIR COMBAT.

MISSION 1

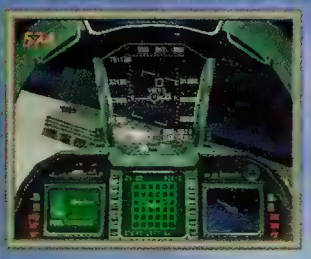


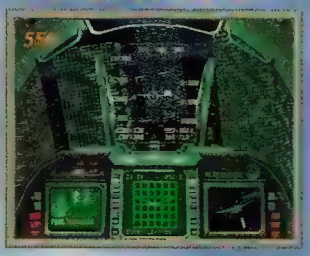
Despite the attractive texture-mapped graphics, an excellent soundtrack, and an always fun two player link option, *Sidewinder* is nothing more than just a small step up from *Air Combat*. Actually, there's only one reason it doesn't just totally smash the popular Namco shooter: a definite lack of speed. Is it just me, or are jet fighters supposed to move...well...fast?

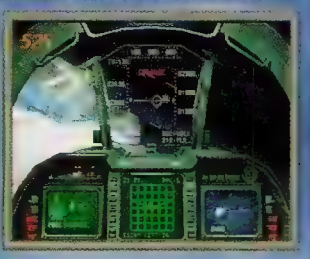
It's not that *Sidewinder* moves slow in battle. If anything, the dog-fighting is the best part, with a much more realistic feeling than *Air Combat*. Where the speed problems set in is when you approach ground objects. At the rate your craft should be moving, why does it seem like getting out of the plane and walking would be faster? Even with my afterburners on, it literally took me over a minute to get to a huge bridge that (judging by the size) couldn't have been more than a few miles away. Actually, it's kinda sad. *Sidewinder*, even with it's "realistic" cockpit look and tight control, lacks that one important factor preventing it from being an actual aircraft simulator. Perhaps that's why I'm being so harsh on the game. Early pictures gave me grand thoughts of playing something advanced, not just another version of *Air Combat*. But then again, if you can overlook the lack of speed, you're in for one heck of a treat.

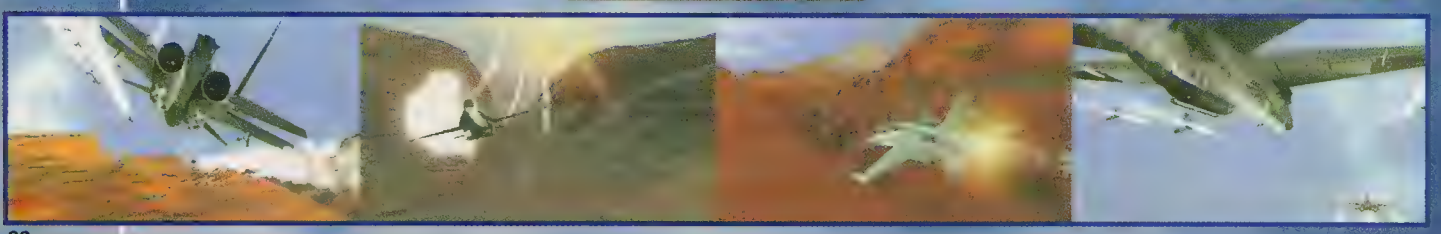
Graphically, *Sidewinder* is stunning. With texture-mapped enemies and buildings, tons of diverse backgrounds, and almost no pop-up, this is one of the better looking PlayStation games I've seen so

MISSION 2









TRAINING MISSIONS

for. Missions take place over nearly every landscape you can imagine, ranging from the standard mountain ranges to foggy ocean coastlines. You'll find yourself destroying huge aircraft carriers, leveling oil fields, and even protecting a passenger jet from harm.

Aside from the annoying "warning" voice, the sound effects and music in *Sidewinder* are outstanding. The guitar background suits the gameplay, and every jet and helicopter emit the perfect sound as they close in for the kill. The voice, though, needs to go. It's not that the acting itself is bad, I just quickly got real tired of hearing "There's a missile right on our tail, shake it off!" every few seconds.

Sidewinder was a good attempt at making a true flight simulator, but sadly enough the low speed killed it. Not that it's a bad game; if viewed in the same light as *Air Combat*, it can only be considered a definite upgrade. But, of course, that's not saying much. Thanks, but for my flight needs, I'll just stick with *Warhawk* for now. -Orion

RE-REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - YUKES

PUBLISHER - SCE

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - ADVANCED

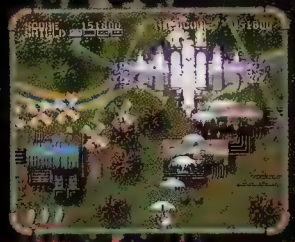
AVAIL. NOW JAPAN

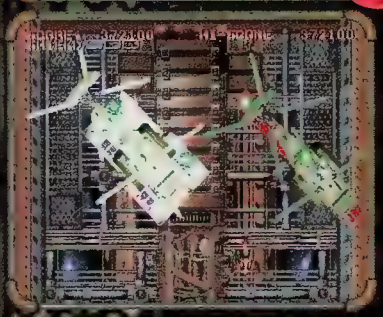
WANTED: THIRD PARTY COMPANY WITH A LITTLE FORESIGHT...

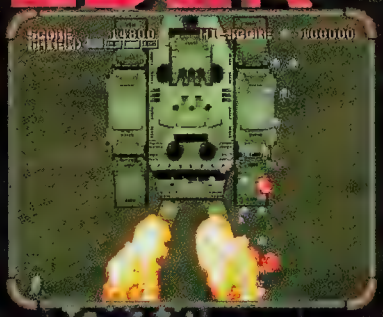
Why am I reviewing Hermie... again? ... two reasons. Which is first reviewed Hermie many hours to review a game that I could str... find out is extremely low and increasingly challenging. Also I must ... the false notion that ... is a chicken lover, as reported ... this so not a chicken review. Add to that the fact that Hermie ... some insane reader I ... came out here due to the overwhelming ... amusement of ... men, Sirs, and you're ... big, pink pain dragons. ... me to ... place ... for ...

... contract ... which would have ... to be changed, was no ... fault, and it's still not available in the U.S. Hermie and Motor Toon Grand Prix both of which are already secure bound for Japan, must make their way stateside. ... cool and all, but ... variety, the epic ... life!

STAHLFEDER







PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SANTOS

PUBLISHER - SANTOS

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - BEGINNER

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

I'll keep this short. *Stahlfeder* is thoroughly awfu... er... bad... er... well, it's okay, I guess. A little bit worse than that, maybe. Or... well... Gah! I want to just cut into *Stahlfeder*, but something keeps stopping me. That something is *Two-Ten Kaku*. Yes, you probably missed *Two-Ten Kaku*. We did it last issue, but had to cut it to make room for some other game that didn't suck as much. Yes, we didn't cut *Horned Owl*, we didn't cut *Dead Heat*, we cut *Two-Ten Kaku*. That's just how bad it was.

So, compared to a real shooter (say, *Galactic Attack* for the Saturn), *Stahlfeder* is a festering, painful boil. But compared to *Two-Ten Kaku*, well, it's a masterpiece. Well, that might be going a bit far. Even keeping *Two-Ten Kaku* in mind, it's still pretty bad. But not quite as bad. Nothing's as bad as *Two-Ten Kaku*.

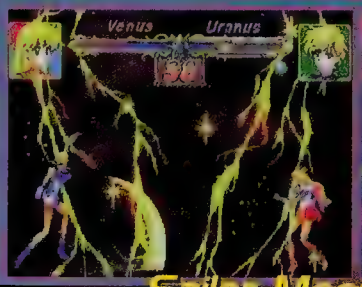
But anyway, *Stahlfeder*. Six levels. Really, really, slow-moving. The only thing that keeps you awake is the soundtrack, each song of which starts out kind of good for about 10 seconds, but then loops the same grungy techno-ish riff about 6 trillion times in each unbearably long level. Each level has a couple of polygon enemies, and a polygon boss, but they're such a snooze to fight, and look so out of place, that it's hard to be impressed.

The only cool thing about *Stahlfeder* is the variety of ships, each of which has two different weapons you can switch between at any time. So if you want to play it again, you can have a somewhat different (but equally painful) experience with a different ship. Except of course you won't want to play it again, 'cause you'll probably beat it the first time. That is, if you can handle the stupidest last boss in the history of video gaming.

It has some choppy parallax and okay effects, which is a heck of a lot more than *Two-Ten Kaku* ever had. So, if for some reason you *had* to buy an overhead shooter for your PlayStation, and already had *Gunbird* and *Twin Bee Yahoo* and *Philosoma*, buying *Stahlfeder* would be slightly preferable to buying *Two-Ten Kaku*. Of course, let's face reality here. When would anyone ever really be in that situation? This whole paragraph is just a horribly failed attempt to say something nice about *Stahlfeder*. I probably shouldn't have even bothered. It's just a complete and utter pile. -Takuhi

TAKUHI
IF YOU ABSOLUTELY MUST HAVE A SHOOTER, DON'T BUY STAHLFEDER!

Nick Rox's PLAYSTATION PREVIEWS

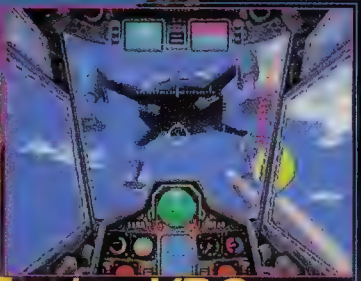


Sailor Moon Super S

Wow! A fully rendered CG *Sailor Moon* fighting game with amazing 32-bit effects from Angel, due in early March! How can life get any better?!?

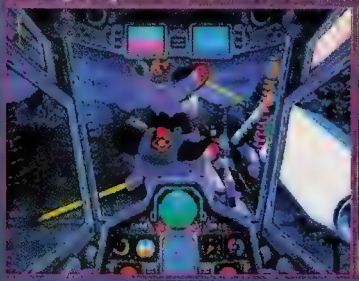
Track & Field in Atlanta

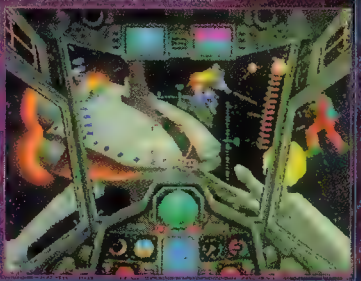
Even though Konami's resigned themselves to a sports-infested future, they haven't forgotten their past. *Track & Field* returns! Whip out those turbo-fire controllers, 'cause *T&F in Atlanta*'s coming this summer.

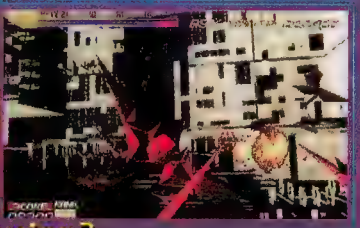


Mobile Suit Gundam V2.0

Another thrilling battle between Char and Amuro in the never-ending *Gundam* saga is headed your way from Banpresto. A 3-D shooter like last year's *Gundam 1.0*, you now have the option of playing as the Zion forces and fight against Gundams. Yeah! *MSGV2.0* is due in March.





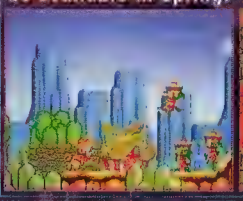


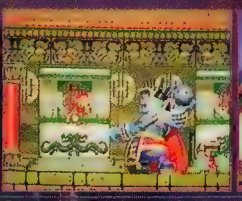
Galaxian³

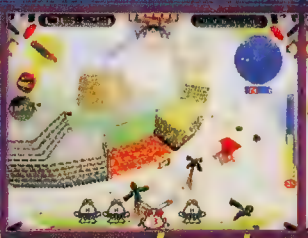
Supreme joy will soon be yours with Namco's top FMV excitement, *Galaxian3*! *G3* combines several Namco arcade Theater-6 games like *Project Dragoon* and *Attack of the Zolgear* with a new scenario, *The Rising of Gourh*. G3 is due in Spring.

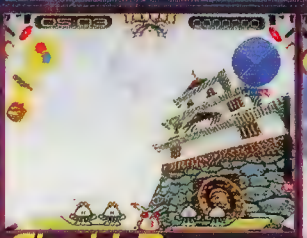
Super Ninja Goku

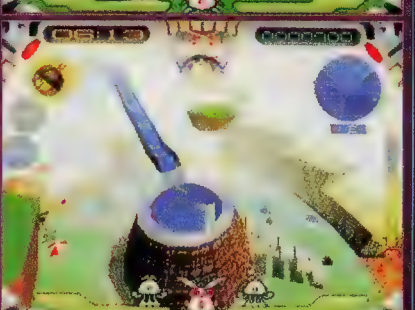
Santos, makers of the terrible-beyond-belief PS shooter, *Stahlfeder*, have a lil' rendered action/platformer based on the ancient Chinese legend of Saiyuki headed to your PlayStation. *Super Ninja Goku* will be available in Spring.









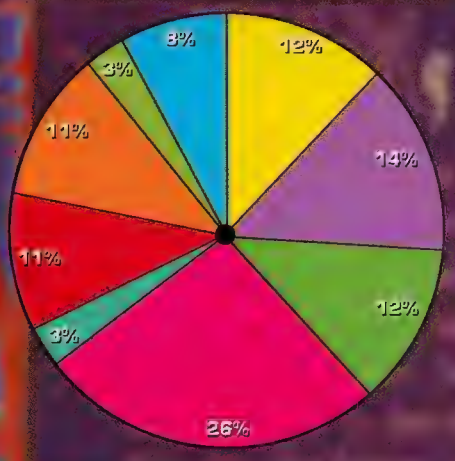


Jumping Flash! 2

Here's a few more shots of *Jumping Flash! 2*. Although it looks very similar to the original, *JF!2* offers many more levels than its predecessor, which is all the original needed to be a transcendental experience. *Jumping Flash! 2* will be available sometime in spring; we'll have a review soon.

Hello, and welcome to the new multimedia Postmeister! Yes, as you can see, I've exploited the advanced computer technology of today to bring you a pie chart, and a cartoon! So, anyway, I thought you might like to see a scientific breakdown of the kind of mail I receive here, so I've painstakingly compiled the info... for you. Because I love you. Each and every one of you. Well, not all the anti-violence wackos and Atari Jaguar-related conspiracy theorists, but all the rest of you. So, if you'll turn your attention to figure 1a, you'll note my lovely pie chart, showing the most common reader concerns. And in figure 1b, the games I'm most often asked about.

Pie chart:
Most frequently broached issues:



26% RPG-Related Issues
We get many impassioned pleas from readers wanting to start pro-RPG letter writing campaigns, political parties, firebombings, whatever. You have the Postmeister's full support...

14% Square and Enix
Are Square and Enix really not releasing any more games here? For the time being, yes...

12% Saturn Inferiority Complexes
It's funny, 'cause we get more letters from Saturn owners than from owners of any other system, by far. And they all start with "I know I'm the only one in the entire universe who prefers the Saturn..." Pretty pathetic, really. Sega should start some group therapy system or something... Let's just all have a hug.

12% Cover Art Butchery
Next to RPG's not coming out, our readers' most impassioned concern. We get hundreds of letters about this every month, and I assume game companies must, too... Too bad none of them seem to care.

11% Atari Lovers
People who just can't accept that the Jaguar is dead, and people who blame us for killing it. Sorry folks, it's over. Accept it.

11% *Virtua Fighter II* Nitpicking
*People pointing out that changes were made in **VFII** and **Rally** after we reviewed it. My favorite quote: "I hope you jerks at GameFan get beat down by the locals the next time you go to Nippon." We love you, too.*

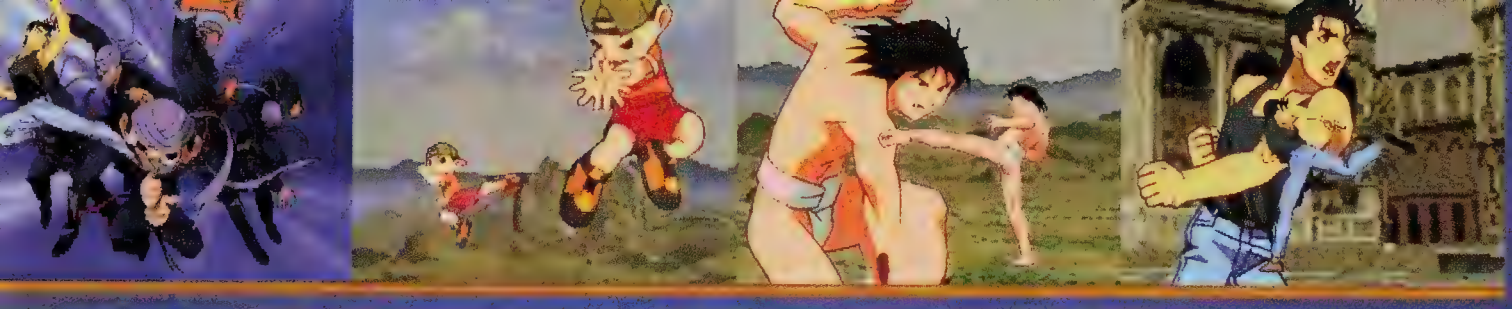
8% General Wackos
*About 3/4 of the letters that fit this column are damning us to hell for interviewing Glenn Danzig (or as one reader lovingly referred to him, "Lucifer."), and to a lesser extent, Clive Barker. The other quarter is made up of people accusing us of glorifying violence by covering **Mortal Kombat** and **Legacy of Kain**.*

3% Want PCFX info
We'll have an PCFX update next issue, probably.

3% Atari Conspiracy Theories
This one probably shouldn't count, 'cause it's only like two people who write about 600 letters a month each. One constantly tries to prove that Sony and Sega and Nintendo (all guided by the Japanese government) brutally crushed Atari because they're American. He sends them to us because we're "the only ones [he] can trust." The other guy's theory is too convoluted to fully comprehend, but somehow, we're to blame. Sad, really.

Most often asked about games:
*1. **Samurai Shodown III***
This one's been gaining steadily, and now everyone wants to know what it's coming for. Just the PlayStation and (of course) Neo•CD as of yet.
*2. **Secret of Mana 2***
This one's been #1 for the last couple of months, but people are finally starting to lose interest... Or, rather, hope.
*3. **Marvel Super Heroes***
No word from Capcom yet. I doubt a CD system could handle it without some sort of memory cartridge...
*4. **Genso Suikoden***
*Now that **Arc the Lad** and **Beyond the Beyond** are confirmed, PlayStation owners are getting behind this one in a big way.*
*5. **Resident Evil** (for Saturn)*
*The #1 concern of Saturn owners, now that **RayEarth** and **Shining Wisdom** are confirmed. Sorry folks, no word yet...*
*6. **Ultimate Mortal Kombat III***
It's coming for just about everything except the N64.
*7. **Castlevania***
This year for the PS-X, Saturn version still in doubt.
*8. **Tenchi Sozo (Creation of Heaven and Earth)***
We've heard Nintendo's licensing it, but still no confirmation...
*9. **Romancing Saga III***
Not a chance, I'm afraid.
*10. **Dragon Quest VI***
A possibility for a Nintendo license, but don't bet on it.

Dear Postmeister,
I have some questions that I'm sure a lot of people want answered. Please answer at least a couple of the more important ones.
1) Is Akira Toriyama alive? A Korean friend of mine recently returned from his native land with 38 tapes of *Dragon Ball* and the news that their creator had died in a tragic car accident. If, heaven forbid, my slightly unreliable pal is telling the truth, does this mark the end of *Dragon Quest* and *Chrono Trigger*?
2) Why did Capcom change the name of *Street Fighter Zero* to *Street Fighter Alpha*?
3) What happened to that new four-button fighter involving robots that Capcom was developing?
4) Will that cool looking *Robotech* game for U-64 still be coming out upon system release? I didn't see it in your review of the Shoshinkai show.
5) I've looked high and low for *Darkstalkers 2* in the arcades, to no avail. Is it planned for the home systems?
6) Is *Resident Evil* going to be exclusive for the PS?
7) What does Konami have in store for the new systems? Anything new?



REVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - SOJ

PUBLISHER - SOJ

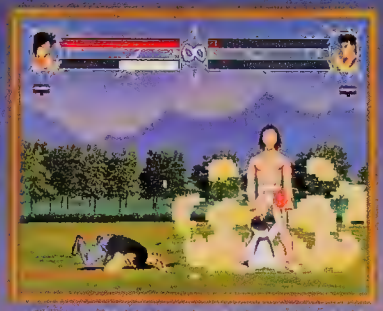
FORMAT - CD

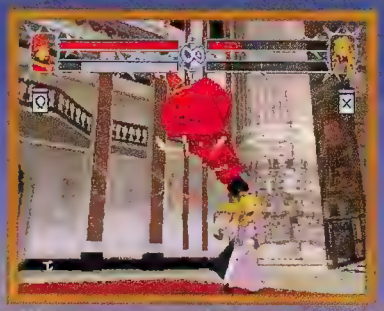
OF PLAYERS - 1-2

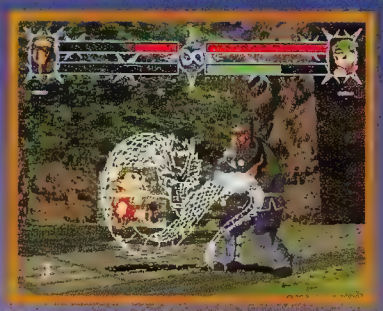
DIFFICULTY - BEGINNER

AVAILABLE - NOW JAPAN

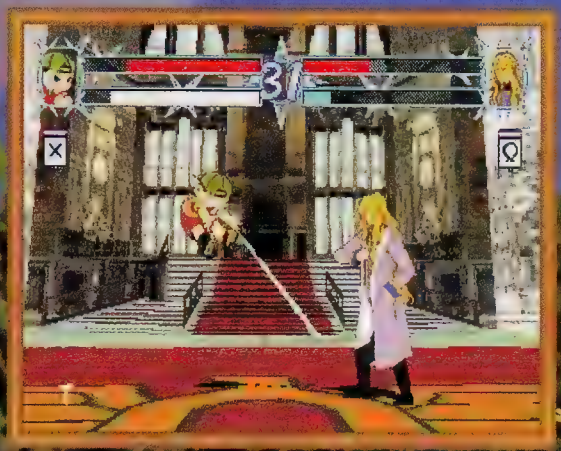
ORION
A TOUGH GAME TO HATE...







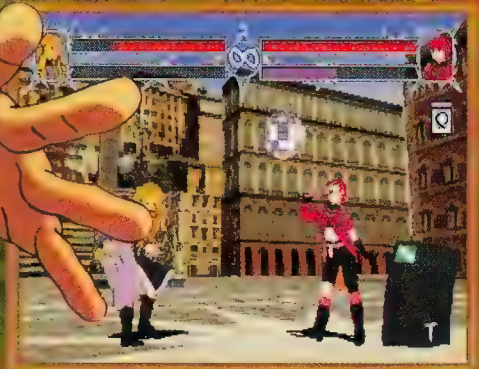
Home fighters today seem to be getting more and more advanced, from the smooth animation of *Night Warriors* to the massive amounts of textured polygons in *Tekken 2*. Then *Ninku* came along. Having a more "cartoony" look than most fighters (actually based on the popular anime of the same name), this game relies on humorous gameplay rather than strong mechanics or visual splendor for its appeal.

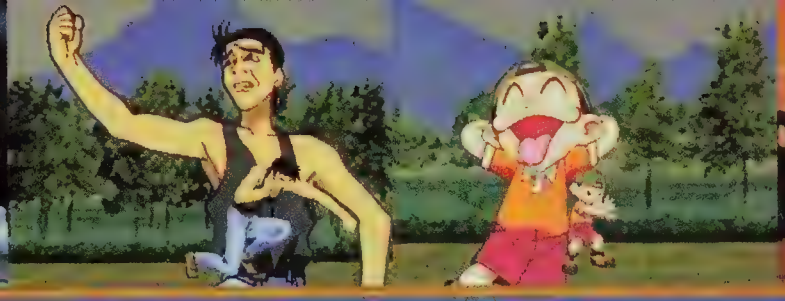


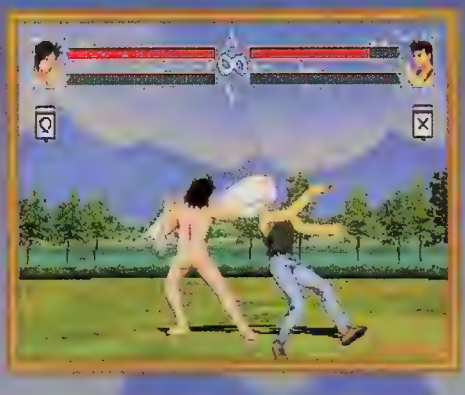
First of all, *Ninku* has some of the strangest characters, with the weirdest moves, I've ever seen in a fighting game. One of the more demented of the 8 selectable fighters is Touji, who does things like taking off his loincloth (the only fabric on his body) and using it as a weapon (we won't even go into his super). Then there's Fusuke, who's got to be the coolest fighting game character of all time. This little dude uses his small size to run under fireballs, and licks his enemies to humiliate them.

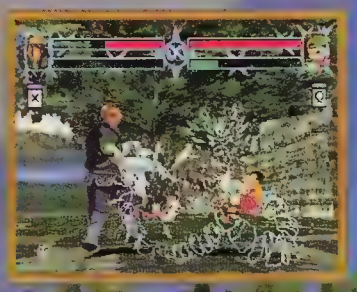
The moves are easy to perform (nothing really more complex than the standard fireball motion), and the more you use them, the

NINKU



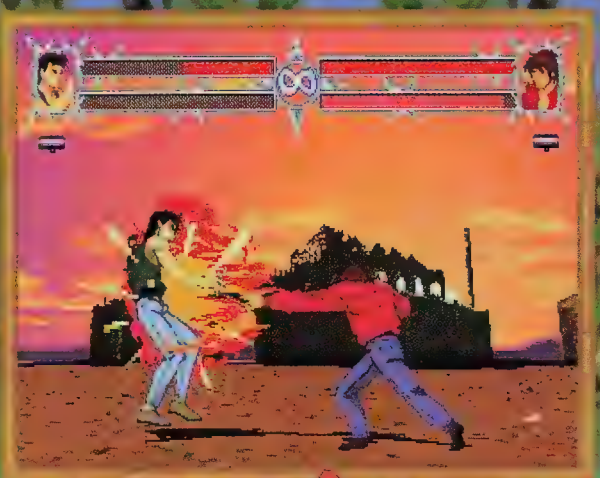






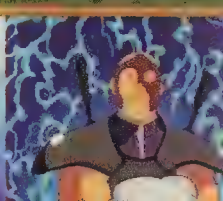
faster your special move bar fills. The special moves are also simple to pull off, adding to one of the major faults of this game: *Ninku* is *way* too easy. I was able to beat the game, using two moves over and over, without even losing a round.

Unlike most fighting games, *Ninku*'s characters are all animation based (they all look exactly like their TV counterparts). Actually, this would have been a great idea, if the fighters weren't missing so many frames. The backgrounds, on the other hand,

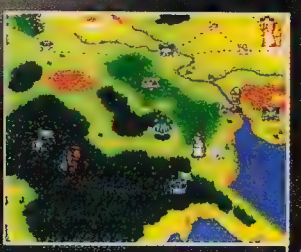


are gorgeous. Before each match the camera pans around the current stage, giving you a perfect 3-D view of each texture mapped level. The music is also very good, with tunes ranging from classical to techno, each of which perfectly fits the background it represents.

Ninku is a hard game to hate. Even with its choppy character animation and lack of difficulty, I still found myself having a good time. If you're a fan of the anime, or are just looking for a laugh, you certainly wouldn't be wasting your time giving it a try. -Orion



E.Storm's IMPORT SATURN Previews



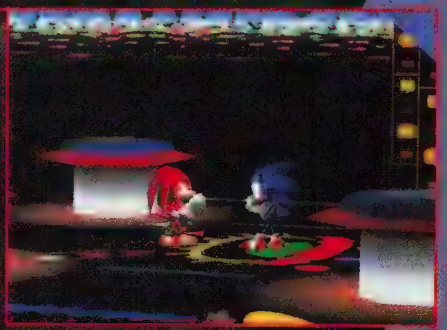
Working Designs has picked up yet another burning hot Japanese-bred RPG. *Dragon Force* features a complex story, many, many characters, and as you can see, the most spectacular fight scenes ever in an RPG/strat setting. *DF* releases this May in Japan. Look for the US version after you come down from *RayEarth* and *Shining Wisdom*.

Masaya's *Langrissa 3*, with character design by *Plastic Little*'s Satoshoi Urushiba, is due in June.

TOMB RAIDERS! STARRING LARA CRUZ

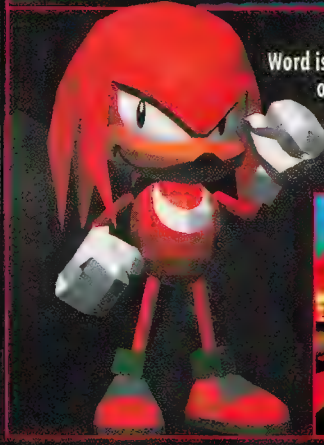
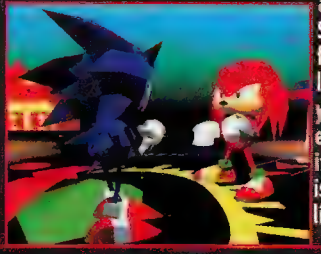
Tomb Raiders is starting to look as good as the story sounds. Check out the added textures since we showed it last (Nov. '95). *TR* may hit first in Japan. That means actual good box art to you and me and a case you don't need a garage for!

Unlike its Super Famicom predecessor, *Albert Odyssey Gaiden* is traditional role playing... no strategy included! No news yet on a US release but *AOG* is set for a March release in Japan.

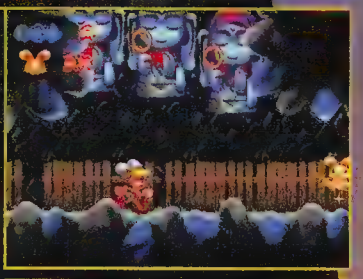


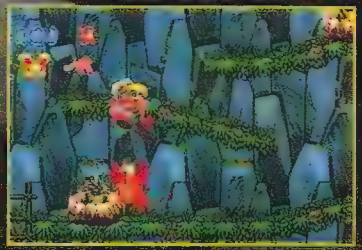
GUESS WHO'S COMING TO SATURN... MAYBE

Word is that *Fighting Sonic*, along with two other Sonic games, are headed our way. Here's the skinny right from the AOU show floor. Eight characters so far with eight special moves each, so far. Get hit, lose rings. Pick 'em up during a fight for bonus points. Sound Sonic-ish, sound awesome? Well, it is! Sonic and the rest have all their trademark moves like Sonic's spin dash and Knuckles flying and the game moves like a dream. I'll be bringing you MUCH more on *FS* next and every month along with more info on the Saturn version if it is indeed confirmed. Seems like a no-brainer, really.

Here's my prediction for Saturn action/platform sleeper hit of the year. Keio and Pochi (her flying dragon) are back in action. This non-rendered (yes!) platformer features brilliantly animated and detailed hand drawn art, 30 fps animation sequences, and is loaded with great gameplay. Keio can dash, find and use lots of weapons, and after saving Pochi, use him in battle. Since Keio's *Flying Squadron* for the Sega CD bombed here (it had no user base left to buy it), I doubt JVC will risk releasing this one over here, so fans may have to track down an import when it's released in Japan this April.





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K-A

SEGA SATURN

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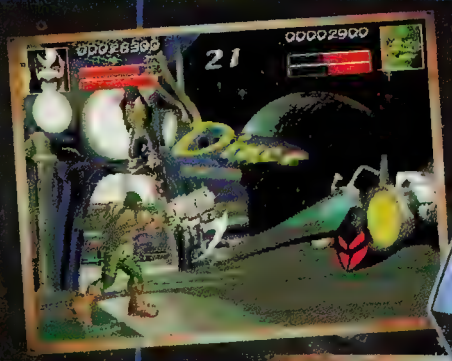
SEGA SECTOR

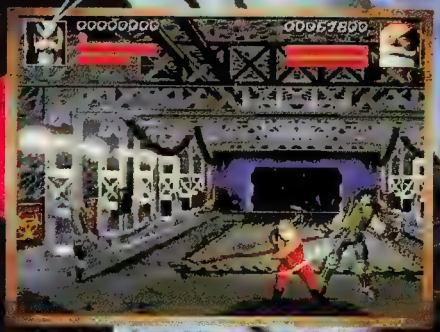


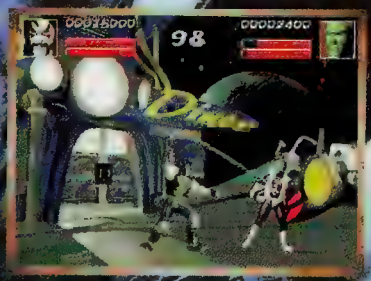
LOBO

PREVIEW

SEGA GENESIS
LEADER OF THE 16-BIT VIDEO REVOLUTION

DEVELOPER	OCEAN
PUBLISHER	OCEAN
FORMAT	32 MEG CART.
# OF PLAYERS	1-2
DIFFICULTY	N/A
AVAILABLE	NOW

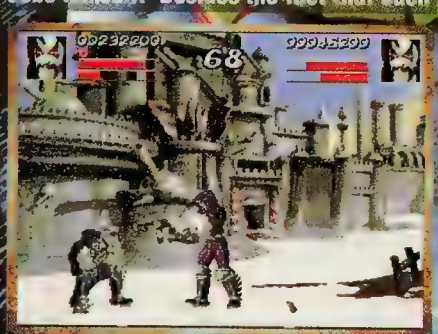


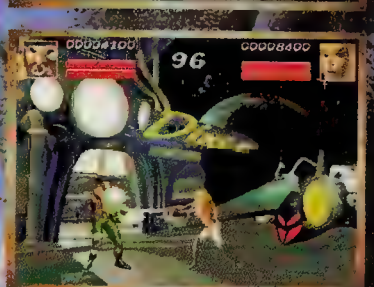


Comic book aficionados should be jumping for joy. That lovable character who's goal in life is to help others... uh, wait, that's that other guy. Let's start again... Mass murderers should be jumping for joy. Their role model, Lobo, has his very own Genesis fighter coming out. We find Lobo on his Harley, taking off for a little intergalactic bounty hunting after a vicious fight with his employer, (or ex-employer) Vril Dox.

Lobo must conquer each one... and these ain't no school girls. Rival characters include, Loo, Kris Krusher Kringle (who else could get away with offing Santa), Shaola, Robert Denitro, Vril Dox, and the most evil of them all, a clone of Lobo himself. Besides the fact that each

E. STORM
HOLY FRAG ON TOAST! IT'S LOBO ON THE GENESIS.





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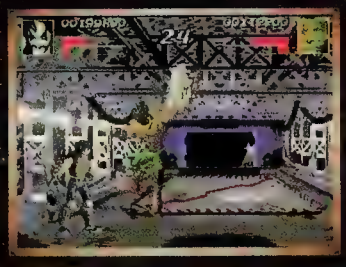
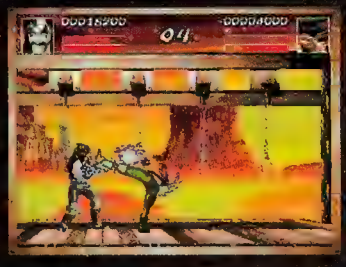
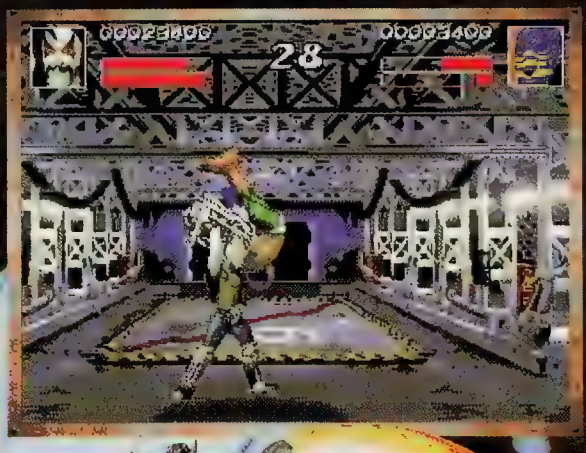
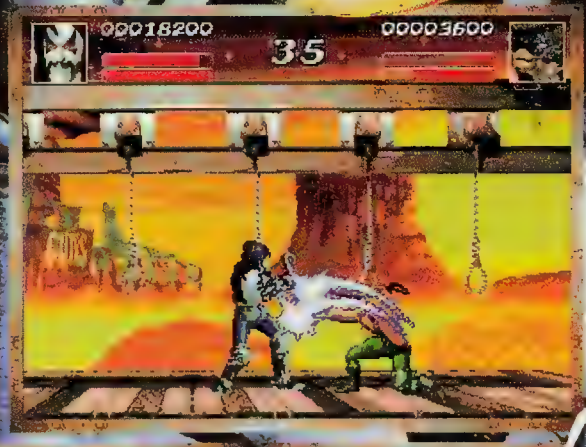
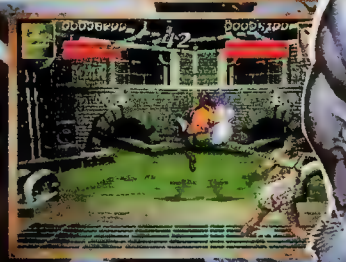
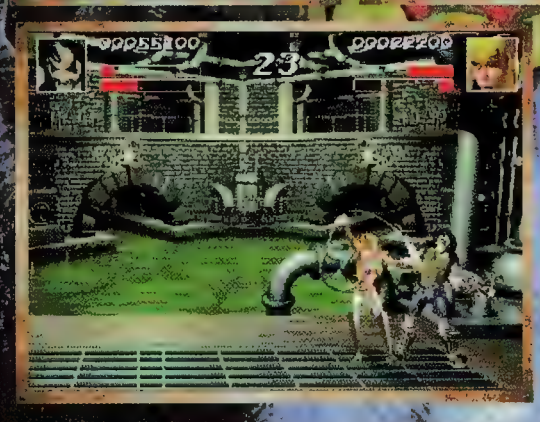










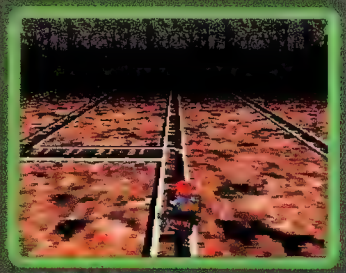


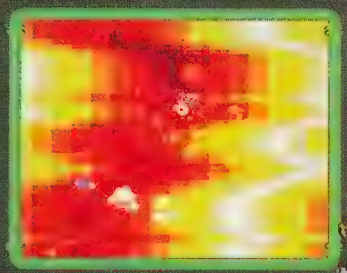
villain has a vast array of character specific weaponry, fluid motion captured animation, and 27 moves, the entire game is pre-rendered on SGI workstations. This means big graphic satisfaction to you and me.

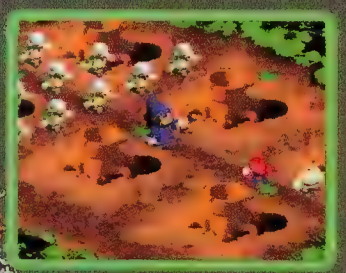
At this point, not much can be said about a combo system, (although two-in-ones do seem possible) balance, or move execution, as we are drawing from a yet un-completed cart. But Lobo seems plenty deep. Some of the button commands (especially the finishing moves), read like algebraic equations, but that's part of the fun in today's modern fighters.

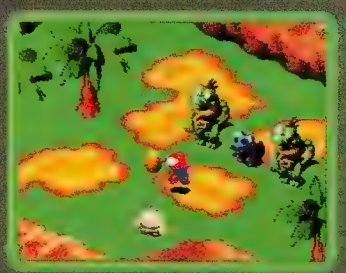
What can be commented on, however, is the graphic presentation in Lobo, and I can assure you, by Genesis standards it's mighty impressive. The backgrounds are diverse, colorful locales including gallows, a sewer, and the freakish fortress of Kris Kringle, complete with falling snow. Gameplay options include solo, practice, versus, and a tournament mode allowing up to eight players to join the fun, er, pain. Lobo's coming home this May, for the Genesis and SNES. We'll do our best to bring you a review of both in our next issue. In the meantime, here's yet another reason to hold on tight to your [illegible]. There's more comi[illegible]out '96!

-E Storm









OK, let's do the math... Square programming + SGI rendered graphics + Mario + Role Playing. Hmmm, I wonder if there's any chance this game will sell. I think it's safe to assume that just about every SNES owner out there is anxiously awaiting this unbelievably uncharacteristic installment of *Mario*. And for more reasons than just the rendered graphics. For starters, I believe this is the first non-Miyamoto directed Mario game. It's also of course Mario's first Role Playing experience, and who better to introduce him to the genre than Square...

SUPER MARIO RPG

I think no one. So, is *Mario RPG* the stuff that silicon dreams are made of? Can Mario, in all of his wacky, waddling cuteness, not only carry an RPG but attract the more sophisticated RPG gamer? Heck, I don't know. I'm no marketing genius (is there even such a thing?). I do know one thing however: *Mario RPG* definitely sucked me in.

This wonderful game has all the trademark elements that make *Mario* games so great, including the entire cast (and then some) of famous *Mario* enemies, intriguing gameplay that mixes puzzle-solving, platforming, and even some musical prowess, along with the feeling you get whenever you fire up a Square programmed game. I can't exactly say the story is intriguing or that the drama is at the fever pitch you'd see in an installment of Final

PREVIEW

SUPER NINTENDO ENTERTAINMENT SYSTEM

DEVELOPER - SQUARE

PUBLISHER - NINTENDO

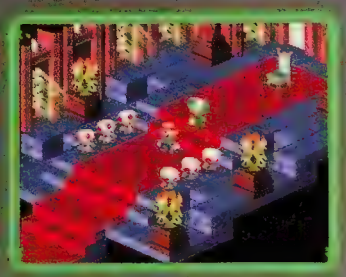
FORMAT - 32 MEG/C1

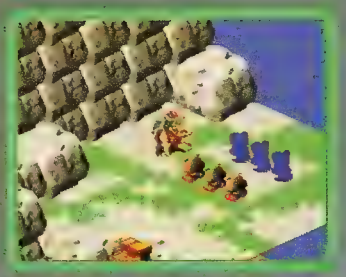
OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - EASY

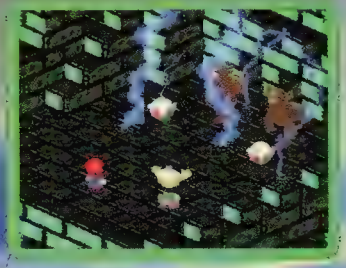
AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN - MAY U.S.

SWEET ENOUGH FOR THE YOUNGEST FAN, COOL ENOUGH FOR THE MOST DIE-HARD ENTHUSIAST. 32-MEG+C1 FOR FIFTY BUCKS... SIGN ME UP!





HEY, PIZZA FACE! ARE YOU A GONNA PLAY MY GREAT NEW ROLE-PLAYING GAME? I SURE HOPE A SO. IT MAY BE THE LAST TIME YOU SEE ME ON THIS PIDDLEY 16-BIT MACHINE, YOU FRUIT CAKE. NOW QUIT WASTING TIME AND GO BUY MY GAME.



fantasy, but hey, this is Mario. He is after all, well... a plumber who never fixes anything. In fact, he has only one goal in life, saving Princess Toadstool. Just how intriguing and drama-filled can the story be? Square does love you though, and has provided a formidable dose of joy in each and every aspect of the gameplay.

During Nintendo's stay at Gamefan, we were allowed only a few hours with *Mario RPG* and experienced many aspects of gameplay. Basically, you maneuver Mario throughout each land, avoiding enemies and overcoming obstacles. When you touch an enemy, he picks a fight and you are transformed into an isometric, menu-driven battle where Mario can use an assortment of classic attacks, as well as a broad range of magic spells. The fight menu is in the vein of *Secret of Mana*, and works very well. The special effects within the fight

scenes are some of the best we've ever encountered on the SNES, and both Mario and his attackers animate. Probably the coolest thing about *Mario RPG* though, is the humor. You see, Mario never speaks. Ask him a question and he'll just nod. And when he tells a story, he does it by mimicking the characters he's describing, imitating an angry Bowzer for instance. When asked to prove if he's indeed the real Mario, you'll find that only one button works... the jump button of course. As soon as he leaps the villagers believe, "You are Mario!" All this, plus music from Koji Kondo, and at least 30 hrs. of gameplay, all in a 32-meg CI burstin' cart for just $49.99 suggests that this indeed will be yet another reason to hold on to your SNES 4-ever! We'll have a detailed review of *Mario RPG* next month. -E. Storm
BOWSER:
All right people! Form ranks!
The bridge is down, but we'll find a way to get back in! Move out, on the double!
GAZ: It was amazing, mom! I just saw Geno walk into the forest! Neat, huh?

Bahamut Lagoon

Square: They who make really pretty games. As far as I'm concerned, Square's made nine great games: *Final Fantasy I-VI*, *Front Mission*, and *Romancing Sa-Ga 2&3*. Yet, in the past year or so, Square has released a number of great-looking yet deeply painful titles with little gameplay: *Chrono Trigger*, *Secret of Mana 2*, the upcoming *Treasure Hunter G*, and the game you see here... *Bahamut Lagoon*. As expected, *Bahamut* is chock full of blazing effects, decent music by Noriko Matsueda of *Front Mission* fame, and [illegible] simple, utterly inane, boring gameplay.

The setting is the world of Aurelius. Vast expanse of sky in which seven floating continents coexist: Granveroa, Carna, Thede, Campbell, Dap[illegible]d, and Mahari. One day the peaceful continent of Carna is invaded by the ruthless Souther of Granvero[illegible] soon revealed that he has come for Princess Yoyo, a legendary Dragoner, a human born in times of great peril who can speak with dragons. Souther means to use Yoyo to awaken the six god-dragons of Aurelius: Valitra, Hyuverion, Garuda, Leviathan, Jurmengard, and Bahamut, King of Dragons, to conquer the world. You play as Bieu, captain of the Carna Dragoons, and at first your quest is to save Princess Yoyo along with Yoyo's loyal servant (and a skilled heavy knight) Matelite, the royal wizard Sendach, and a meager army of castle-folk and a few pitiful dragon-pups. Soon, however, your journey will become a quest to awaken the six god-dragons and unravel an ancient, dark secret. (Who could've thought??)

Bahamut is basically *Shining Force* with dragons. With the novel "Dragon Grow-Up System," you feed your dragons various artifacts, including weapons, armor, items; indeed, any item in the game, and their power increases accordingly. After several feedings, the dragons will mature into totally new beasts. The problem here, however, is that the dragons have tens of thousands of hit points - while you have only hundreds, or thousands. You can win many battles by [illegible] and feeding the dragons (to which you can only issue commands of "Come," "Go," and "Wait") to [illegible] the enemy. WAY too easy. Even if you had no dragons, the [illegible] almost every character has "field" attacks (that you don't have to enter battle mode to use) that easily smash the enemy. What's the point of going into hand-to-hand if you can [illegible] harder from the main map? There are a few innovative strategy elements here, like breaking bridges so as to trap the enemy, freezing rivers to create paths over the water, and setting forests ablaze to deter enemies from passing through them, but these insubstantial improvements cannot help a flawed engine.

The graphics are excellent, but certainly not *Chrono Trigger* or *Secret of Mana 2* caliber. Oddly, every scene is framed by a transparent, rainbow-y haze that rather conspicuously disappears whenever a transparent spell effect is on the screen. The usual range of Square effects is here, but the biggest graphics innovation in *Bahamut* is the multi-jointed characters and enemies that move ultra-smoothly, far beyond what standard animation could provide on a cartridge. The music is pretty good, with some excellent tracks, but mostly it's Nobuo-wannabe filler.

Bahamut isn't bad, and if it was a bit harder it would have been quite good, but it's far from what most gamers associate with the recently-nonexistent concept of "Square quality." If you need Square strategic power, buy *Front Mission*, my personal beloved tactical *tour de force*, and avoid *BL* altogether. You'll be happy you did.

- Nick Rox

Bieu

Yoyo

Matelite

Breed 'n' Lead a Dragon Army

REVIEW

SUPER FAMICOM

DEVELOPER - SQUARE

PUBLISHER - SQUARE

FORMAT - 24-MEG CART

OF PLAYERS - 1

DIFFICULTY - EASY

AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN

NICK ROX

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GAMEFAN SPORTS

SONY'S NBA SHOOTOUT SMASHES THE COMPETITION!
(THERE GOES ANOTHER SPORTS EDITOR)

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NBA SHOOTOUT

GAMEFAN SPORTS

Chip

Cal Cavalier

CAL'S CORNER

Basketball season is upon us. The NBA is in full swing, March Madness is right around the corner, and at least EIGHT new home and arcade hoops games are on the way. (Including those previewed this issue, look for new coin-ops from Midway, Konami, Sega, and Data East.) To separate itself from the pack, Acclaim recently held a press event as part of NBA All-Star Weekend to launch its new coin-op, *NBA Jam Extreme*. The event was spectacular. We all got to see the dunk contest, the three-point contest, the rookie game, and of course, the All-Star Game. (Shaq dunking over Mr. Robinson in his house, dominating the second half, and he doesn't get MVP? C'mon!)

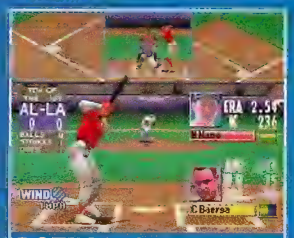
I guess the topic I want to discuss this month is what I consider to be a slightly questionable deal cut between Acclaim and the NBA. According to reliable sources, the NBA was very pleased with their take from Acclaim's home versions of *NBA Jam* (which of course grossed way more than the original arcade game). So the NBA oh-so-intelligently awarded the use of the name *NBA Jam* EXCLUSIVELY to Acclaim for the sequel, dissing Midway completely. Midway's Mark Turmell, creator of *NBA Jam*, is currently working on the ACTUAL follow-up to *Jam*, entitled *NBA Hangtime*. However, with license in hand, Acclaim has created their own rendition of a *Jam* sequel, called *NBA Jam Extreme*. As mentioned in the preview it's a great game, but my question is: Is there an executive, somewhere inside Acclaim, who has a hard time looking at himself in the morning? Hoarding a basic gameplay engine, even if you've published the home versions, just doesn't seem right to me. I bet Turmell's not a happy camper right now. There's been some pretty bad fighting game ripoffs recently, but nothing comes close to this... in my personal opinion, of course.

VIEWPOINTS

"Chip"

Ahh, Konami, a company once known for two spectacular series, *Castlevania* and *Contra*. My big question is, what are they doing here? In the action category they have almost no equal, but sports is a saturated category driven more by licensing than gameplay much of the time. *RC19* was obviously farmed out as it contains little to no TM Konami magic. One camera angle really hurts, otherwise it's a nice looking 8-Ball game that plays very well. Basically video game baseball, no matter how dressed up, is just repetition. The 32-bit versions look real nice but until I get a real time hat cam, I'm steerin' clear.

G	C	P	A	O	
7	8	5	8	1	68



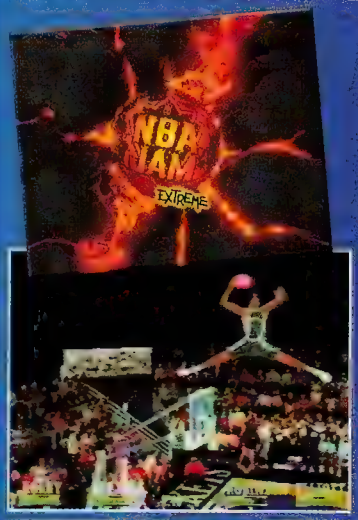
BOTTOM OF THE 9TH
PLAYSTATION
KONAMI

"Cal Cavalier"

Five years out of the sports market, and it's starting to show. Konami's just a bit rusty with *Bottom of the 9th*. It's definitely a solid, playable baseball game, but bits of break-up in the polygons and a quirky batter's box interface translates into the best (by default) PS baseball, but a minor-leaguer compared to *World Series* on Saturn.

G	C	P	A	O	
7	7	7	7	6	81

GameFan Sports Previews

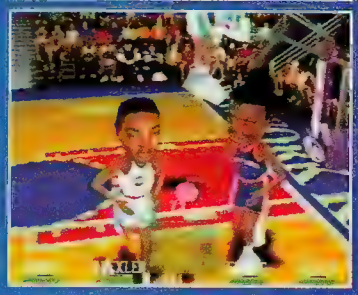


The most successful sports game of all time, *NBA Jam*, is back, but that's no surprise. The big surprise is that Midway had nothing to do with it, Acclaim went off on their own this time... and the game is actually quite good.

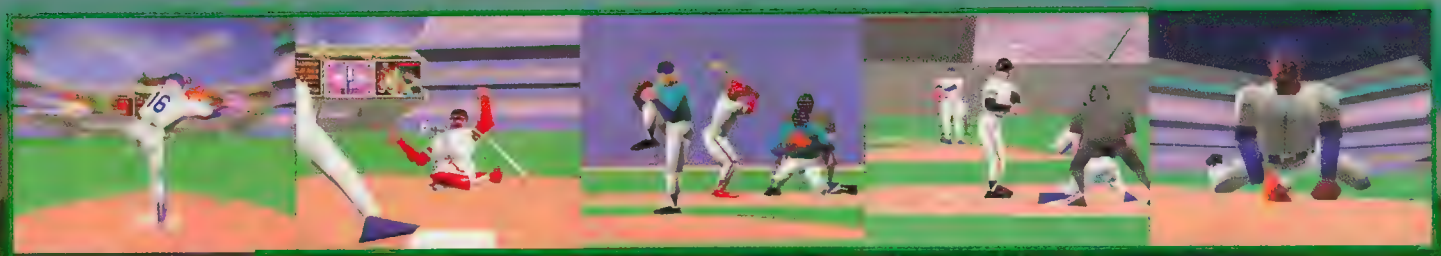
I have been skeptical about Acclaim's alleged turnaround, but with the power of *QB Club* and this game, it's starting to look real. Sculptured Software has done a great job of bringing *Jam* into the 32-bit world. The game features textured polys and still plays in the traditional 2-D perspective, but there's tons of exciting 3-D on the fly camera shiftiness to make the game feel more realistic and like a TV broadcast. The game's sprites are HUGE (I'd estimate 30% bigger than the old sprites), and you still get real players with digitized faces mapped onto the polys.

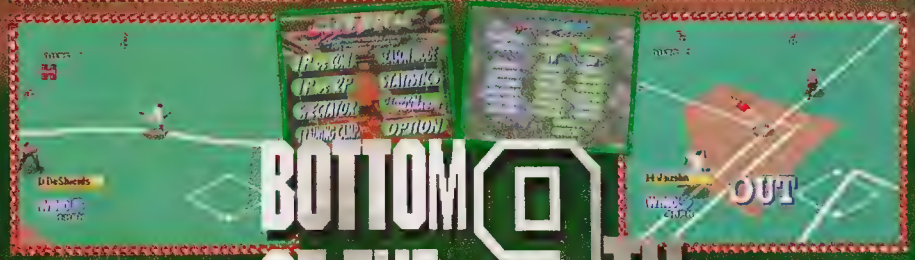
Gameplay is 100% of the old *NBA Jam* engine, but with many upgrades. First is the addition of a fourth button, the *Extreme* button. Basically a Super Turbo (think of Turbo as a run button and *Extreme* as a dash button), *Extreme* enables new gameplay techniques and of course lets you run really fast, but at the cost of twice the normal Turbo meter expenditure. The Turbo meter, by the way, will now dissipate more quickly in general and won't regenerate as fast, making for more strategic use of the meter (it rarely ran out in old *Jam*). Other new gameplay includes diving for loose balls, many more dunks (of course), and a whole slew of new hidden characters (including editors from game magazines, whooee).

Jam Extreme is tons of fun, features enough new gameplay to justify its existence, and might well keep pace with or even exceed Turmell's *Hangtime* (I haven't seen it yet; I'm praying for all-new hardware, but I've heard that it's the same engine with just new sprite graphics and effects... ouch. In any case, we'll know for sure at the coin-op show in March.).



Acclaim's getting good mileage out of the tried and true *Jam* license. *College Slam* is synonymous with the 16-bit *NBA Jam T.E.* game engine with new graphics and college teams. My burning question for Acclaim is, not being able to replicate college players faces, a trademark feature which helped bring the *Jam* to fame, what's the hook for *College Slam*? In any case, a vast majority of the top NCAA teams (no actual NCAA license, though) are featured, including my namesakes, the CAL Golden Bears and the Virginia CAVALIERS. There are head-to-head, full tournament, and final four options which accommodate for up to four players. But still, the gameplay is, in almost every aspect, *NBA Jam*. So, if you are one of the two people who've never played *NBA Jam*, you must, must, *must* purchase this game. Otherwise, uh, well, hmmm, I'll try to think of something else to say...





BOTTOM OF THE 9TH

GAMEFAN SPORTS

REVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - KONAMI

PUBLISHER - KONAMI

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - MARCH

Though Konami hasn't quite reached the pinnacle of 32-bit sports, they have come off the line first, and given us a powerful basketball game already. And now comes *Bottom of the 9th*, Konami's first next-gen baseball effort, which is a slightly quirky, gouraud-shaded polygon baseball game for the PlayStation that, while not quite as impressive as *World Series* for the Saturn, is still a fairly good PS baseball game.

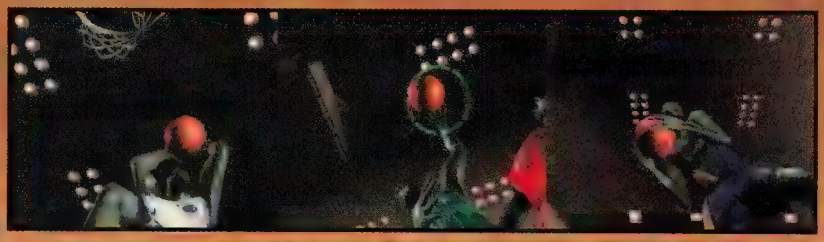
Bottom of the 9th doesn't hit it [illegible] the power alley with its graphics. The game has only one camera angle and decent (but not excellent) motion-captured polys. Unfortunately, there's a bit of noticeable flicker and glitchy break-up among the polys.

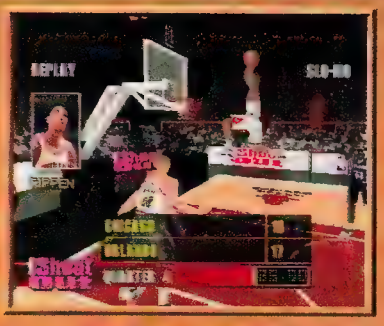
The gameplay is good, but Konami might have been a bit too ambitious with the control schematics. The batter's box interface is very different from past baseball games and takes LOTS of practice, so don't expect this to be a game you can just pick up with the ol' *RBI* skills. There are some useful options including a training mode where you can hit for either accuracy or power, and the size of the contact box is appropriately affected.

9th is a good enough game to keep you [illegible] with a season mode, and the real player licenses (including many signature swings and stances for actual players) will keep MLB fans entertained, despite the lack of "real teams." The sound is great, especially the brilliant intro music and the fluid, American-sounding play-by-play announcer. Until competition emerges, Konami has the inside track on the PS pennant (even if by default). -Cal Cavalier

CAL CAVALIER
SO WHERE'S *CASTLEVANIA* ALREADY?

NBA Shoot Out





SAMPLE SPORTS

PREVIEW

PlayStation

DEVELOPER - SONY

PUBLISHER - SONY

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-8

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - APRIL

CAL CHANLER

It's just SO over for everyone. Sony, the clear-cut champ of football and hockey, has created a game so heart-stoppingly spectacular that even anti-sports gamers can't stop talking about it. *NBA Shoot Out* does what the PlayStation was meant to do: 3-D polygon, shift-on-the-fly, fluid, realistic environments.

This baby's generating 225,000 polygons per second, resulting in the best polygon movement I've ever witnessed in a sports title (and possibly any game ever). There are seven unbelievable camera angles, including a "manual" where you can adjust the camera! From the too-powerful-for-words instant replays, to the reflections in the floor, to the mega-smooth, motion-captured animation, *NBA Shoot Out* is so close to perfection that I almost want to call it the first "Second Generation" PlayStation game.

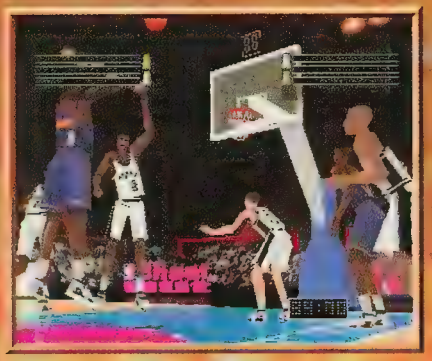
The game of course features real NBA teams and players, and a smorgasbord of season/mode options. The gameplay keeps stride with the superior graphics, and feature a vast selection of show stopping (some totally unique) moves: alley oops, 360° jams, tomahawk slams, jump shots, speed bursts, steals, blocks, windmill dunks, reverse dunks, mid-air dishes, and dunking over defenders! Okay, it sounds like I copied a Sony feature list (I did), but our version was incomplete... I have the utmost faith in these guys; it'll all be there, trust me.

Shoot Out breaks new ground in, well, almost

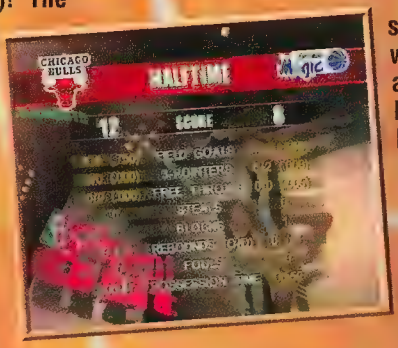
CAMERA VIEWS

MOTION CAPTURE

Sony cares so much about all the fans, they just had to take the time and money to motion capture Latrell Sprewell of the Golden State Warriors! All right!

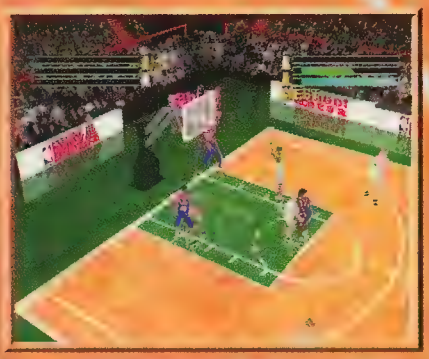


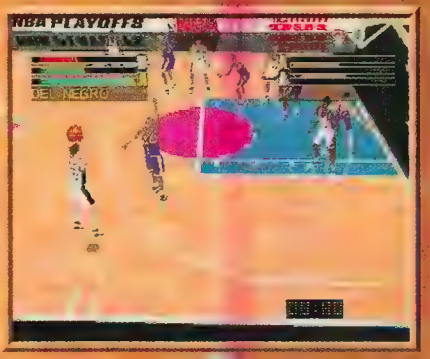
every area. This is the first multitap game to support 8 players (two taps plugged in, awesome)! The com-mentator has possibly the smoothest, clearest voice ever (No. CA fans will recognize the voice; it's NBA PA announcer Dick Calahan from the Golden State Warriors). There are lots of gameplay options, including the ability to trade players along with arcade and simulation modes.

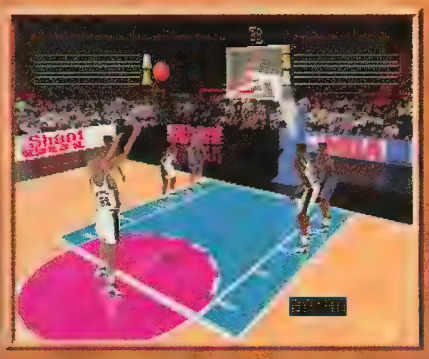


And of course, you can save your season to memory card!

In the preview version we played, there were some unfinished aspects, and it still had the tightest AI I've ever experienced. After the obvious tweaking takes place, we'll give you the final word on *NBA Shoot Out*, but... with Sony's track record... things look just a bit grim for everyone else. -Cal Cavalier







SLAM 'N JAM '96

GAMEFAN SPORTS

PREVIEW

SEGA SATURN

DEVELOPER - CRYSTAL DYN.

PUBLISHER - CRYSTAL DYN.

FORMAT - CD

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - ADJUSTABLE

AVAILABLE - APRIL

CAL CAVALIER

ALLEY OOP!!!

Crystal's highly acclaimed *Slam 'N Jam* is back on Saturn. Dubbed (by myself, at least) the greatest basketball game of all time in its original incarnation, *Slam 'N Jam* has been surpassed by other polygon heavyweights, most recently *NBA Shoot Out*. Will *'96* be improved enough to recapture the title?

In its early preview form, *Slam 'N Jam '96* appears very, very similar to the previous version, but with much smoother animation. So far, the gameplay seems to be going in the right direction with all the alley-oops, dunks,rejections, etc. found in the original. The 3-D, over-the-shoulder perspective is one of the most effective, playable viewpoints in any basketball game (If you've never played the original *Slam 'N Jam*, think of a 32-bit *NCAA Basketball*). And Crystal does a fantastic job of exploiting it, with solid, glitch-free sprites.

What new features will be in *Slam*, if any (such as multiple camera angles, new play mechanics, etc.), remains to be seen, but the addition of real NBA teams and players is a big plus. How the game's new namesakes, Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, will participate is unclear, but you can't help but pull for Magic in anything he does. Maybe this will be the beginning of a new video game era for the Magic man, whose Virgin outing was, well, a big air ball. -Cal Cavalier

K2

The long awaited coin-op sequel to Rare's rendered fighting game is now slowly trickling into arcades nationwide. *Killer Instinct 2* not only improves upon *KI*'s graphical splendor, it also manages to branch off and further refine its own, distinctive style of gameplay. This is a good thing.

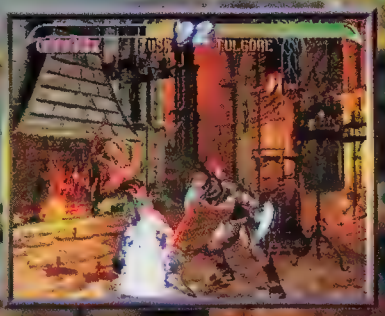
Great gameplay might be the key to a game's longevity, (and *KI2* has that in spades) but it also takes great graphics to attract new players. Knowing this, *KI2*'s designers lavished even more attention to graphical detail and introduced even more cutting-edge special effects in this new and improved game. Let's take the characters for starters.

All the fighters were painstakingly rendered on sophisticated Silicon Graphics computers, resulting in an alarming amount of realism and personality in the characters. You can actually see the veins in Jago's biceps and wind blows through Kim Wu's hair convincingly.

In the first KI, all the characters had this expressionless "glossy-eyed" look on their face. *KI2*'s fighters now possess more emotion and realistic attitudes during each match. In some cases, a single move can have up to 3 voice samples devoted to it. Rare did their homework.

The backgrounds possess an equal amount of refinement and attention to detail as the characters. Each round begins with a flashy, multi-perspective zoom-in camera technique that brings plenty of "oohs" and "ahhs" from passers-by and players alike. Impressive!

A quick visual scan of the background graphics further reinforces Rare's hard-earned "SGI gods" status. In the 2-D stages (there are seven 2-D stages and six 3-D stages in all) there is an insane amount of line-scrolling on the ground plus up



R REVIEW

ARCADE

DEVELOPER - RARE/NINTENDO

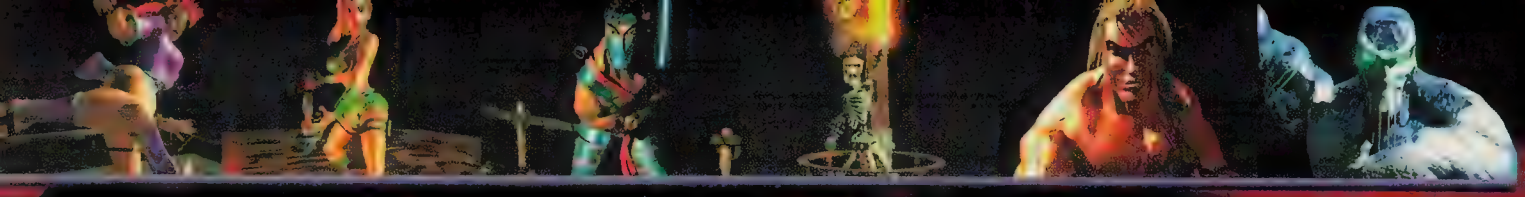
PUBLISHER - MIDWAY

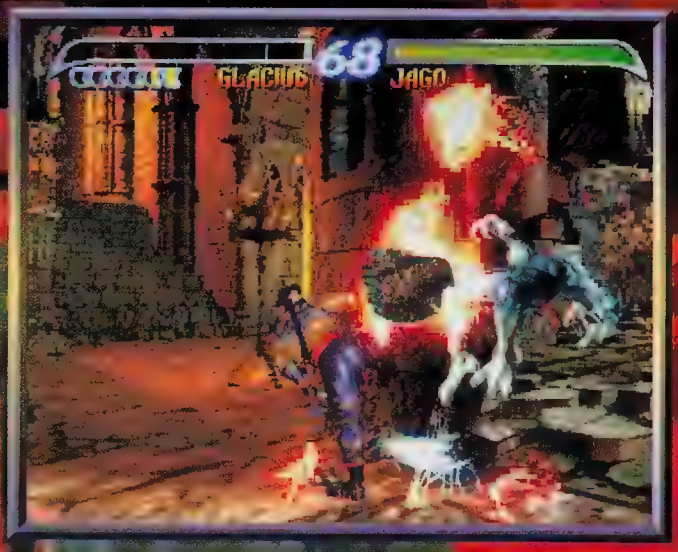
FORMAT - ARCADE

OF PLAYERS - 1-2

DIFFICULTY - INTERMEDIATE

AVAILABLE - NOW

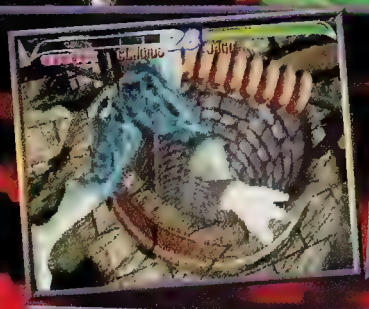


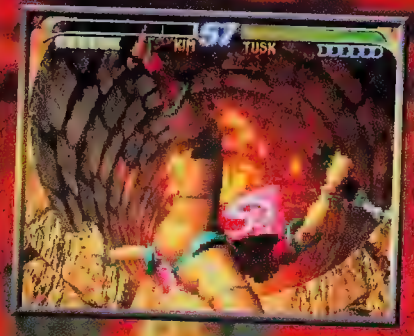


to 5 layers of parallax in the very back of the level. Not only that, but you can also nudge, break and interact with objects in the background. Walls smash to pieces, lava comes flying in from the background and tree leaves fly off branches.

The depth of gameplay in *KI2* is so extensive, it would take an entire book to properly explain it (Gee, what a great idea!). In the original *KI* an inexperienced player could win with cheap moves alone. In *KI2*, all of that has been fixed. Every move and tactic can now be alleviated or countered in some way. In other words, a skillful player will eat a cheap player for breakfast. When this game was first on test, I read some negative feedback from players via the Internet. "The first one was better," "The game doesn't have any counters," and "There's nothing new here" typified the mood on the 'net.

Well guys, *KI2* is MUCH different (and better) than the first game, there ARE counters in the game and there are also countless other

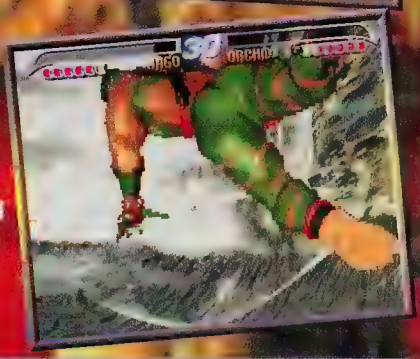




gameplay techniques, secrets, and tricks yet to be discovered in *KI2*, believe me. In fact, *KI2* is the deepest fighting game I've ever played, bar none.

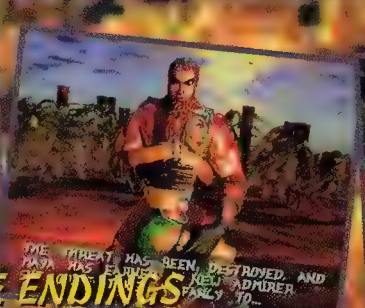
Nintendo and Rare have created a highly polished and refined fighting game that is easy to pick up, difficult to truly master, and most of all... fun. For only their second attempt, *KI2* is an amazing piece of software. The scariest part is that these guys are just getting started.

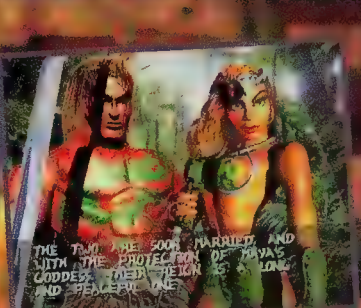
- K. Lee



WITH ANOTHER CHALLENGE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED, TUSK THIRSTS ONCE MORE FOR BATTLE. HE BEGINS THE ARDUOUS JOURNEY BACK TO THE ARENA

MULTIPLE ENDINGS





8) Will LucasArts bring any of their *SCUMM* story system games to U-64?
9) Can X do any *SF* moves in *MegaMan X3*?
10) How can I get ahold of copies of production art from games, specifically Capcom games, that you guys get for the magazines?

Jonathon Holmos
Boxboro, MA 01719

*1) My god, no! He's ended **Dragon Ball**, but he's still alive and well... At least, I haven't heard anything to that effect, and since he's probably Japan's most popular manga artist, I'm sure it would be mentioned in all the Japanese magazines.*
2) Who knows? I mean, it still has the "Z" thing in the character select screen, they should have just left it the same...
*3) **Cyberbots**? It came and went, I suppose, although I'm sure you can still find it in arcades.*
*4) Nintendo only showed games that were definitely coming out for the Nintendo64 in Japan at the Shoshinkai, and it's unlikely that GameTek has the foreign rights to **Robotech**, or would be releasing it there. I'm sure it'll be at E3.*
*5) **Night Warriors** never made it out of test market here. It's out for the Japanese Saturn, and is coming to US Saturns in a month or two.*
6) It's lookin' that way.
*7) They have that gorgeous **Genso Suikoden** in Japan, but no news of a domestic release. They also have **Gradius Deluxe Pack** (with **Gradius 1** and **2**), and **Castlevania** and **Contra** are in the works.*
*8) For the N64? You look at the N64 and think, "Wow, I wonder what **Maniac Mansion** would be like on this?" You're kidding, right?*
9) See Hocus Pocus.
*10) Start your own game magazine? Peel it off a coin-op? Buy the Capcom Illustrations book at your local Japanese bookstore? (I know there's a Sasuga Bookstore somewhere in Mass...) If you're interested, you can also get illustration books for SNK games, **Final Fantasy**, **Romancing Saga**, **Tactics Ogre**, and a ton of others.*

Dear Posty,
Why didn't you write anything about the Ultra 64 in the January issue? I have some questions I hope you will answer. Here goes:
1. Will the Ultra disk enhance the Ultra 64 in any way?
2. Will the Nintendo 64 and Ultra 64 be compatible?
3. Does Square plan on a *Final Fantasy* all stars type game for the Ultra 64, or *Chrono Trigger 2*?
4. Are all the buttons on the Ultra controller analog-based?
5. How much RAM does the Ultra 64 have?
6. How much memory does the Ultra memory card hold?
7. In the November issue you said Ultra 64 changed the R4200 chip to a R4300, which runs at 150mhz. Is this true?
Thank you for your time.

Matthew Criswell
San Antonio, TX

Nintendo's keeping the press in the cold about the Nintendo64 until E3.
1. Besides the obvious benefits of games with more memory, no.
2. We won't know for sure, but we've heard that yes, they will.
3. Square isn't doing anything for the Nintendo64 (it will no longer be called the Ultra) until the Bulky Drive comes out. Then, it's a possibility, but don't bet on it.
4. No, only the stick.
5. 36 megabits.
6. 1 megabit (or so).
7. They did change it to the R4300, but it only runs at 93.75mhz.

Dear Most-Wiser,
If you've got a minute I was hoping you could answer a few questions for me. What the heck is going on over at Virgin? It's been about a year since I first saw those groovy-looking screen shots of *Spot Goes to Hollywood* for the 32-bit platforms. Now I see a Genesis version and it's got Acclaim's name on it. What's up with that? Is the delay of the next-gen versions due to Dave Perry's departure, or have they just been scrapped entirely? You know everything, so if you could clue us all in I'd be one happy gamer.
P.S. If they've gone "PC game only" on us, forget I asked.
P.P.S. I walked into Best Buy today and saw a large crowd (10) playing *Criticom* for the PS-X. Ten feet away was a Saturn with *VF2* playable and NOBODY was standing there. "Go figure."

Mark DeSharke
Garden Grove, CA

*Worry not, **Spot**'s alive and well for the 32-bit machines. The main development team was switched over to work on the next-gen versions, and the 16-bit ones were sent out of house to be completed, and then licensed to Acclaim. Dave Perry had nothing to do with it... he left quite a while ago, and Virgin has plenty of experienced programmers left.*
*Anyway, Virgin definitely hasn't gone PC-only (perish the thought). They've got a number of 32-bit projects in the works (including the game conversion of John Carpenter's **Escape From L.A.**), and have 1 Nintendo64 game and 3 M2 games in the works.*
*As for **Criticom**... Gah... Clearly there are many more people that must be saved. The Most-Wiser Postmeister's work is never done.*

Dear Post Guy,
1. What is the new Ultra64 release date? How many controllers will it come with? What about memory thingies? Any word on a pack-in?
2. Please print my letter.
3. Are *Doom* or *Descent* scheduled for the Saturn of Ultra64?
4. Is it true Saturn cannot light-source or gouraud shade? And do transparencies? What exactly are parallax backgrounds?
5. Besides the new AM2 fighter, will Saturn get any real *Sonic* and *Ecco* games?
6. Will the Ultra64 have *DKC*, *Yoshi's Island*, a *Yoshi's Safari*-like game, and *Mario RPG*? If so, how will they be different?
7. Will U64 get *Soul Edge*, *Toshinden 2*, or any other PlayStation Games?
8. Is *Resident Evil* scheduled for Saturn or U64?
9. When will *Marvel Super Heroes* be coming home and on what systems? U64?
10. Will *Killer Instinct* (is it even coming out) and *KI2* be on one cartridge? (*KI Deluxe*?) When?
11. Will *Cruis'n* get new tracks or anything new?
12. Will these be on U64 before '97: *Earthworm Jim*, *Mega Man*, *Metroid*?
13. Did you see *From Dusk Till Dawn* or *Broken Arrow*?
14. Will Saturn have *Samurai Shodown 2* or *3* any time soon?
15. What about all those old Sega/Nintendo classics (*Altered Beast*, *Out of this World*, *Battle of Olympus*, etc.)? Will we ever see them again?
16. *Primal Rage 2*?
17. *Saturn Rail Chase 2*?
18. Home versions of *Jurassic Park* or *Aladdin's Magic Carpet Ride*?
19. Can you expand your letters page?

Willyum James Haley
Hawthorne, CA

*1. September 30th. One Controller, one memory card with very limited memory. **Mario**'s your pack-in.*
2. I think not. What have you ever done

for me?
*3. A new version of **Doom**'s coming for the N64.*
*4. Saturn doesn't have any of that in hardware. It's simple enough to have software gouraud shading... **Ayer's Adventure**, for example, has some pretty impressive gouraud shading. Light-sourcing is trickier, and transparencies are near impossible. Parallax is having many backgrounds that move at different speeds.*
*5. *TWO* **Sonic** games in development for Saturn, supposedly. One 3-D, being programmed here in the states by the maker of **Sonic 3**, and a side-scroller being done in Japan by the original **Sonic** team.*
*6. **Donkey Kong Country**'s pretty definite. Shigeru Miyamoto is doing a **Yoshi's Island**-like side-scrolling game, but no word as to who the main character'll be. Probably nothing like **Yoshi's Safari**... There was talk about a **Mario RPG** for N64 a while ago, but I doubt that Square and Nintendo are very getting along too well these days.*
7. Very unlikely.
8. Nope.
*9. Not yet announced for anything. Probably not the N64: Nintendo wants all their developers to use their 3-D abilities and analog controller, and **Marvel**'s not really a candidate for either.*
*10. The N64 **Killer** will be an original game that will have elements of both **KI** 1 and 2, and some new material. Coming this year.*
11. I've heard that it's being redone. We'll see.
*12. **Metroid** probably in '97, no word on the others.*
*13. Unfortunately, I've seen both. **Broken Arrow** was okay, but **From Dusk Till Dawn**... what a pile.*
14. Wish I knew.
*15. Hmmm... The only one of those I even remotely enjoyed was **Battle of Olympus**. But I've heard nothing about remaking any of 'em.*
16. It's quite possible.
17. Let's hope.
*18. Actually, Disney announced they were actually going to make and sell a home VR-ish like system (probably something that works with PC's) based on **Aladdin**, like, a year ago. I've heard nothing since.*
19. Slowly but surely, until I've taken over the entire magazine. Heh heh. Don't tell that Storm fellow.

Dear Postmeister,
I was going to write to you guys last month with many questions about the gaming world, but I had to edit my letter a bit and reduce the number of questions to fit this little paragraph about how Sega totally ditched *RayEarth* and *Shining Wisdom*. As a die-hard Sega fan since the Master System, I had to express my opinions. I think Sega should port ALL RPG's that are produced on the Japanese Saturn to the US since the Saturn specializes in 2-D type games, and most RPG's are 2-D (which makes a deadly combination). I think that porting over games like *RayEarth* would up the sales of the SS, since the genre of choice nowadays is role playing.

And now, a few questions, may I ask them? Thanks.
1. Will *NBA: In the Zone*, *Bottom of the Ninth*, *Goal Storm*, *Madden '96*, *Resident Evil*, *Criticom*, *Tekken 1 & 2*, *Soul Edge*, *Toshinden II*, *Time Crisis*, *Zero Divide*, *Doom*, *DBZUB22*, *Street Fighter Alpha*, and *Loaded* be released on the Saturn? I mean, since all the companies that made these games are Saturn 3rd parties, if none of these games came out for the Saturn, it would be totally unfair.
2. Will *Samurai Spirits 1*, *2*, *3*, and *RPG*, *Pulstar*, and *King of Fighters '95* be released on the Sega Saturn since SNK and Sega signed that exclusive rights agreement?
3. Where's Saturn *Sonic*? After all, that lil' blue guy is the sole reason I bought my Saturn. Really! Stop laughing!
4. If possible, can you get shots of *Virtua Fighter III*?
5. Can I expect a *Virtua Cop III* or anything from AM2 or 3 coming out soon? AM2 RULES! Namco who? Rare who?
6. What the heck does "redraw" mean?
7. I have a feeling that the new character in *Virtua Fighter III* (Japanese Girl) is Kage's mom... Don't you?
8. *Panzer Dragoon II? Astal II? Lunar III?*
9. Will *VFIII* be made on 64-bit material? If so, how will Saturn translate it?
10. Will there be a *Sonic "All Star"* type game for Saturn?
11. *Castlevania* for Saturn? *Ristar*? *Shining Force?*
12. People tell me that *Fighting Vipers* sucks. I was looking forward to that game. Can you please review it sometime soon?
Well, gotta go. Bye, Sai Chen, Sayonara, Paalam!

Michael Berromilla
San Diego, CA

*Actually, between Working Designs, Atlus, and to a lesser extent, Sega themselves, most of the big Saturn RPG's are already on their way here. Still up for grabs: Sunsoft's **Albert Odyssey Gaiden**, **Masaya's Langrissa III**, Sega's mysterious **F(Ph?)antasy Earth**, **Blue Seed**, and **Wrinkle River Story**, Hudson's **Tengai Makyo Gaiden**, and a couple of other new titles.*
*1. Hey hey hey, don't despair! You get **Criticom**! Heh, heh. Sorry, that's not very funny, is it? Well, **Madden '96** will come out eventually, **Street Fighter Alpha**'s out, **Loaded**'s coming, and the Saturn got its own **DBZ** game, which was a lot better than **UB22**.*
*2. **King of Fighters '95** is coming in March in Japan, with its own RAM cartridge. No word on the **Samurai** games, and **Pulstar** isn't **SNK**'s to license. It's Aicom's.*
3. See the above letter!
4. I wish. Maybe after the AOU?
*5. **Virtua Cop II** just came out! **Daytona II**'s coming, as are **Virtua Fighter Kids** and **Fighting Sonic**, and AM3's new fighter, **Last Bronx** (**Fighting Vipers** w/weapons). More after the AOU (next issue) maybe.*
6. In what context? Like, the way a TV constantly redraws the image you see on it?
*7. The new character (her name is Aoi) is like, 18. But Kagemaru's mom has existed as a character in the **VF** world for some time (in sketches and such). Connection?*
8. Yes! Maybe! Probably!
*9. **VFIII** will probably be the first Model 3 hardware game, if it's not **Virtua Kids**. It'll probably be a crunch fitting in on Saturn, but anything's possible.*
10. Dare we dream...
11. Maybe! Maybe! Maybe!
12. Awesome game, retarded characters. We'd review it, but I don't think it's coming out here.

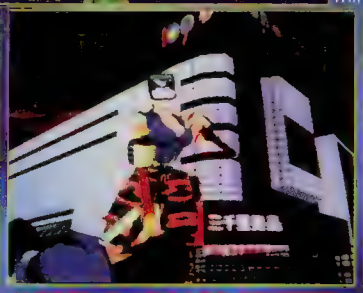
Write to me or I'll run for President!
The PoSTmeister
5137 Clareton Dr. Suite 210
Agoura Hills, CA 91301

NICK ROX'S JAPAN NOW

日本今日

RANDOM INFO

- Capcom has announced *Mega Man X3* for the Saturn and PlayStation... and, of all things, the 3DO. *MMX3* is due in late April.
- Nintendo64 may be pushed back until July due to an insufficient amount of systems being manufactured. We've heard you'll be able to *pay* for the system on 4/21, but you'll get it in July.
- Namco is rumored to be developing *Rave Racer* for the Nintendo64.
- A wacky rumor has it that *VF3* will be released on the Saturn with an upgrade cartridge next April.
- Sony's supposed to be working on a mini PlayStation with a built-in monitor.

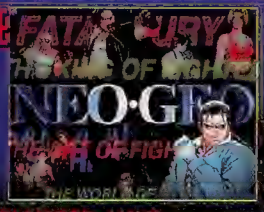


LAST BRONX - AM3'S NEW MODEL 2 ARCADE FIGHTER

Yet another Model 2-powered arcade fighting game is headed your way from Sega, but this is the first developed by AM3. *Last Bronx*, which, coincidentally, takes place nowhere near its namesake (unless you consider downtown Tokyo the Bronx) has no ring-outs ala *Fighting Vipers*, and you can smack your opponent against the walls. All the characters use weapons, as well. *Last Bronx* is due the first half of '96.

ART OF FIGHTING 3 ON SNK'S WEBSITE

SNK of Japan's new website (http://www.neo-geo.co.jp) is packed with info on their upcoming, supposedly fully-rendered fighter *Art of Fighting 3* as well as updates on their PlayStation and Saturn consumer games, theme park info and more!



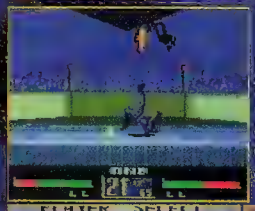
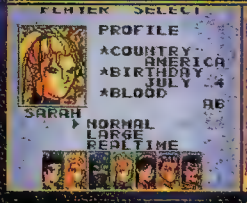
KOF'95 COMES TO SATURN WITH A ROM CARTRIDGE!

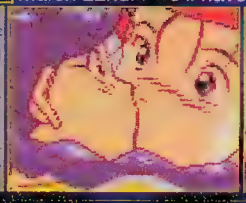
Yes! This is a dream come true for Saturn owners who demand arcade-perfect translations. Sega's unique Twin Advanced Rom System! This allows you to store game data on two media formats, utilizing both at once to store all the backgrounds and animation frames of the original arcade title. The *KOF'95* cart/CD combo, which comes out March 29th for ¥7800, will store 16 Megabits of information on silicon, and the rest on CD. Way to go, SNK/Sega!

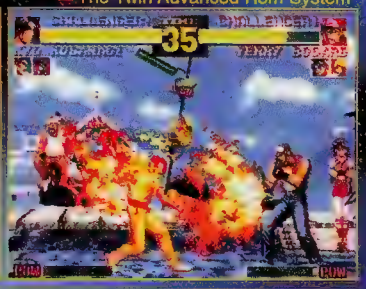
▲ The Twin Advanced Rom System

VIRTUA FIGHTER MINI

Here it finally is... the 8-meg *Virtua Fighter Mini* for Game Gear. The biggest shocker here, however, is that the game SCALES! *Samurai*-style SCALING on the GG! *VF Mini* is based on the currently running *Virtua Fighter* TV animation b action anime gods Studio Pierrot. *VFM* is out March 22nd... we'll have a review next issue.

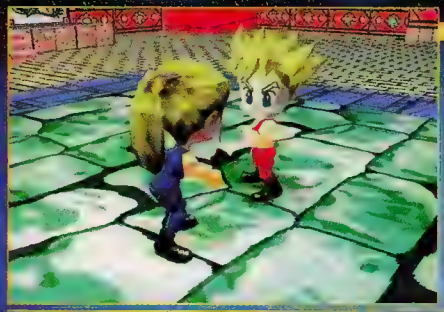
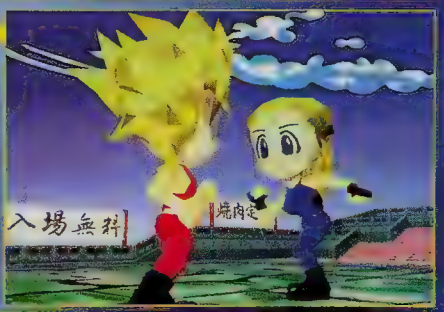
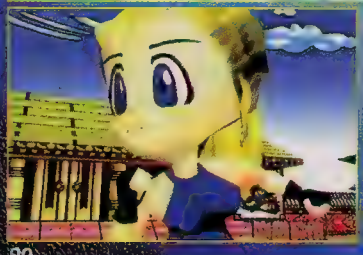
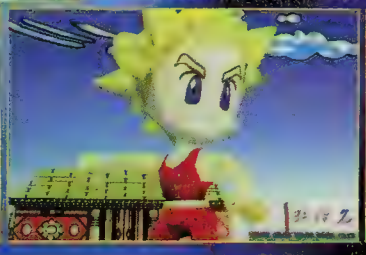
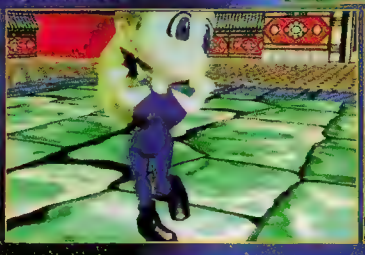




FIGHTING DIAPERS!

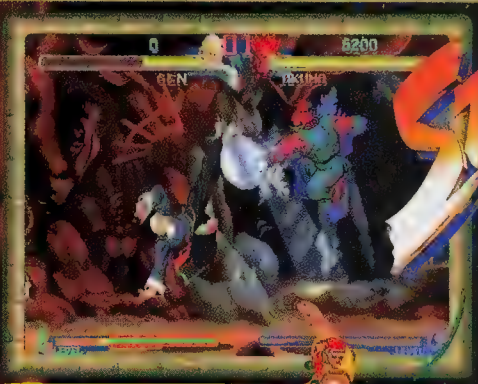
(ACTUALLY, IT'S *VIRTUA FIGHTER KIDS*)

OK, I'm now totally justified in saying that AM2's getting [illegible] these days. *Fighting Vipers*, *Sonic*, and now *VF Kids*... wacky! Yes, *VF Kids* plays almost exactly like *VF2* (though the developers are labeling the gameplay system *Virtua Fighter* 2.3) and AM2 has also said that they're going to add new childlike voices for the characters. My only questions are how will the characters interact with each other with such large heads... and, if they're supposed to be "kids," what's up with Sarah's chest? *VFK* will be in arcades in Spring/Summer.

CAPCOM
STREET FIGHTER
ALPHA
2

STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2



PREVIEW

ARCADE

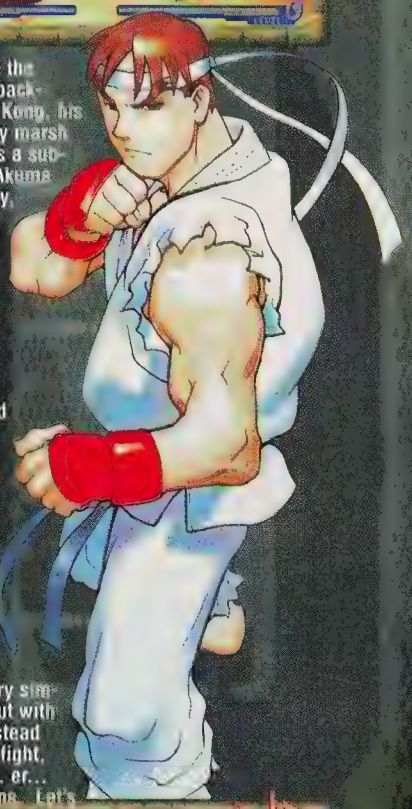
- DEVELOPER - CAPCOM
- PUBLISHER - CAPCOM
- FORMAT - CPS2
- # OF PLAYERS - 1-2
- DIFFICULTY - VARIABLE
- AVAILABLE SPRING?

For the past few months, the hardcore *SF* players at GF (Nick Rox, K. Lee, and the Enquirer) have been speculating about the next chapter in the *Street Fighter* series. Some thought *SF III* was finally on the way, but I've been hoping (even praying) for an upgrade to the original *Alpha* for a long, long time... quite literally, since the first day I saw the game. Original *Alpha* was, and is, one of the greatest fighting games ever, but those backgrounds just didn't live up to expectations. More characters, more moves, and new backgrounds would certainly make me more than happy to wait another year for *III*.

Capcom has more than answered, they have exceeded my prayers with *SFA 2*. Not just the minor upgrade that I expected, *Alpha 2* is the most extensive upgrade any company has ever done to any fighting game. In any case, I expected a few new backgrounds, maybe three new characters, and very few new moves. Instead, we get 100% ALL NEW backgrounds for every character, five new characters, an all-new Custom Combo system, and so much more.

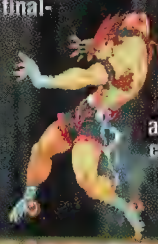
So, first to the subject that I haven't yet stopped talking about since I first saw the game, because I still can't believe it: the backgrounds. How much of an improvement over *SFA* are we talking about? So much so, that the worst BG in *SFA2* is better than the best in *SFA*. Now, everyone's background is actually PERSON-

ALIZED to the character, unlike the charmless *Alpha 1* BG's. Dan's background is on the streets of Hong Kong, his homeland. Adon's is his swampy marsh from *Street Fighter I*. Akuma's is a subterranean cave with a shrine of Akuma statues. But the most personality, the details that make you go "hooo-ey," are found in backgrounds featuring Capcom characters. Guy's Metro City scene is straight from *Final Fight* and includes Cody, Andore, Jessica, and good ol' Two. P stuck in a nasty Haggar headlock. Ken's Eliza birthday party bash BG is probably the greatest background ever in the history of the universe, with a multitude of characters from popular and obscure Capcom games (such as *Night Warriors*, *Captain Commando*, and *Strider*). Felicia in the hot tub is too cool. Birdie has the most hilarious background ...remember the *Final Fight* scene where you beat up punks who hop out of toilet stalls? Well, despite Birdie's lack of association with *FF*, a very similar scene forms his backdrop, but with one major new improvement: Instead of punks popping out of stalls to fight, you simply get to observe their... er... (real and implied) bodily functions. Let's



THE ALL-NEW "CUSTOM COMBO SYSTEM"

The big, much discussed addition to *SFA2* is the Custom Combo System. When executed (the exact method is still being finalized; it could be a button combination, a motion, or both... we pray it's a motion), the Custom Combo drains your Super meter into a very short timer. The instant you start the Custom Combo, you are invincible and you slide into your opponent and/or suck them into you. Then you start the combo, where basically ANYTHING can connect, two-in-one, juggle, etc. If you simply flange with this method you will probably get 6 hits and do minuscule damage, but if you use skill you can do a sequence of attacks, dragon punches, juggles, even super(s) for 20+ hits and big damage. Some players are a bit uncertain how to react to this feature, because some think it is a bit cheesy, but generally most players adapted quickly and think it is fair. (Of course the Custom is blockable at its start and the Custom-using fighter can be countered.) There are many untapped possibilities here, and it's very flexible: You can start the Custom on the way in from a jump, or even two-in-one into it!



NEW ALPHA COUNTERS!

just say that several of them appear to be in the [illegible] Combos. What's even cooler is [illegible] never know which scary freak you'll [illegible] them are reading newspapers).

Background personality is crucial, [illegible] stop there. Now let's talk effects. [illegible] line-scrolling or "warping" which [illegible] and better than ever, in almost [illegible] stages have three to five layers of parallax [illegible] shocker) there are previously CPS II-unattempted, 32-bit caliber spe[illegible] such as a line-scrolling lens flare in Bison's flying fortress stage, and many stages with incredible lighting effects, such as the sunbeams which illuminate Akuma's cave. And there are those details which just say Capcom cares, such as the water splashing in Gen's rainy, darkened, crumbling building. All these ele[illegible] late into, quite simply, the best hand-drawn backgrounds of all time.

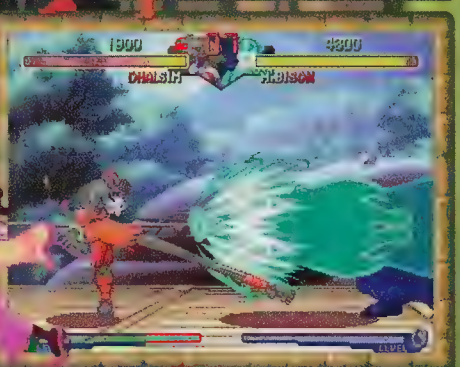
SFA2 has an amazing number of selectable characters: 18. Yes, 16. That's all 13 [illegible] necessary for Bison, Dan, or Akuma), plus the five new characters. Let's take a lon[illegible] characters in-depth.

Sakura, Capcom's coolest new female character since Rose (all Capcom babes ar[illegible] described as the following. Ryu's female head on the anime character Sailor Moon's body [illegible] which translates as "cherry blossom," is a 16-year-old schoolgirl with tremendous [illegible] She was looking for new challenges when she noticed Ryu. She was so impressed that sh[illegible] to start street fighting and imitate Ryu's moves, but with exciting, lovely new variations. Shoken is a running multi-hit Dragon Punch, her Sempuu kyaku has three completely differ[illegible] and is amazingly useful, and her Hadoken can be done in three varieties: a 3/4-scr[illegible] fireball (it dissipates), a 1/2 screen distance, wider-circumference shot, and an ext[illegible] hugely wide blast. Sakura hopes someday to learn more from Ryu. From a gamep[illegible] is a Ryu clone who is the most different of all the various Ryu clones. With the vari[illegible] attacks, plus many new unique features (she is the first character to get a Super wh[illegible] awesome running slide), she is an effective and reasonably fresh character. From a [illegible] tive, everyone seems to have fallen for her. Hey, I can't tell you how many times people [illegible] plained that female fighting game characters are usually too weak, and that someo[illegible] fireball/uppercut female who can compete with Ryu or Ken. Only time will tell if Sa[illegible] one else are correctly balanced, but in design and execution, Sakura is flabbergasti[illegible]

Next is Gen. SOME might just assume he has very little new or unique, but just the [illegible] elderly *Street Fighter I* character has been outfitted with one of the most original feat[illegible] tory of fighting games: selectable styles. He has two different fighting styles, and e[illegible] unique walking/wait animation, unique attack animations, unique special moves, unique super combos...wow! We need to study in more detail, but it appears Gen has nearly twice the normal animation frames of any other charac[illegible] ter due to the two styles. In one style he has a Honda-type hundred hand whack and a kick uppercut, and in the other he switches to "tick" mode with a roll and a Vega-ish wall leap. He seems very effective, and could become a top fighter.

Let's move on to Rolento, certainly the most unexpected addition to the group. (I thought Sodom was obscure, but choosing a Level 4 *Final Fight* boss who was cut from the SNES version? Crazy, but I am not complaining.) Like Gen, Rolento has a few moves which are a bit reminiscent of other *SF II* characters, but much new, unique technique which gives him his own style. He uses his club in a three-swing, Fei Long-style sequence attack which can rack up to 11 hits with three swings. (The [illegible] amused by Capcom's [illegible] tion. It needs to end.) He can also do a flyin[illegible] throw, a super-fast ground spin, and a wall ju[illegible] attack. His Supers include an amazing defensive ground grenade roll, and a pile driver-type grab where Rolento's wall-scaling bud-dies throw down a hook from the top of the screen, which will snag you for mas-sive damage. If balanced (standard qualifier), Rolento should be an

(Continued)

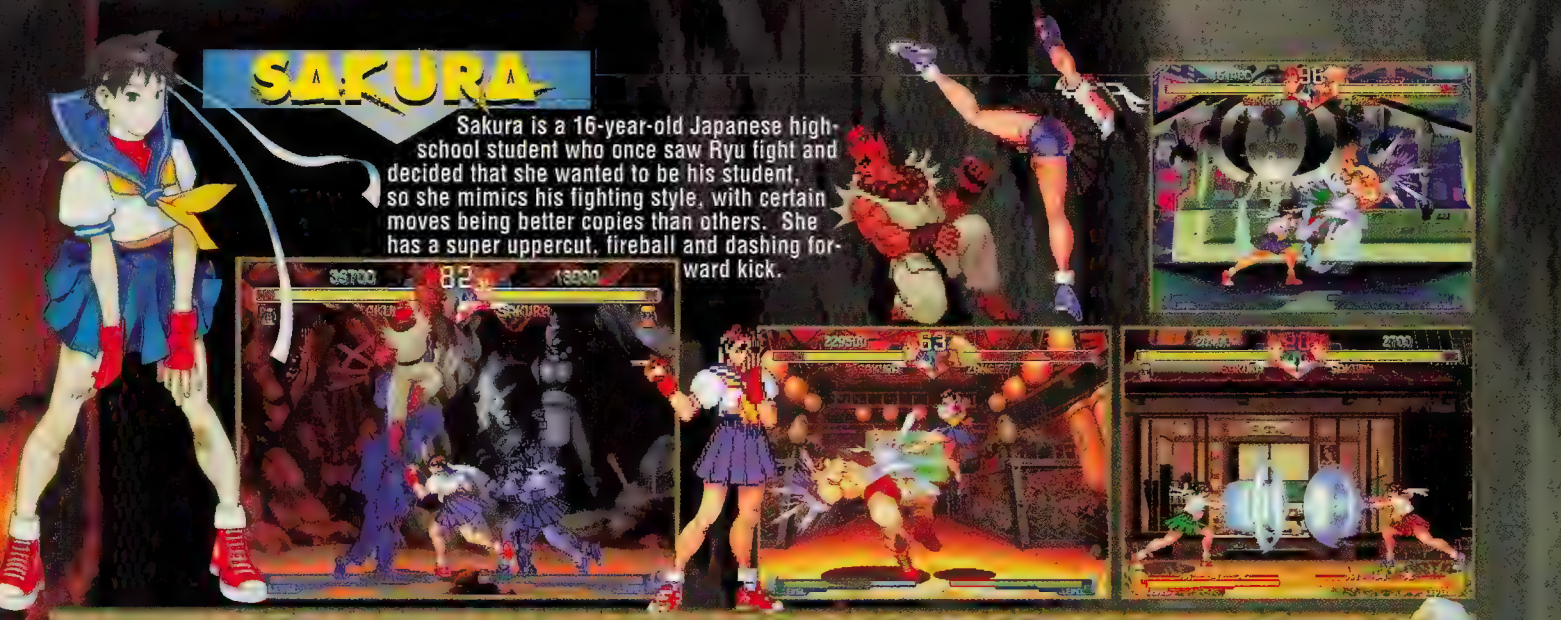


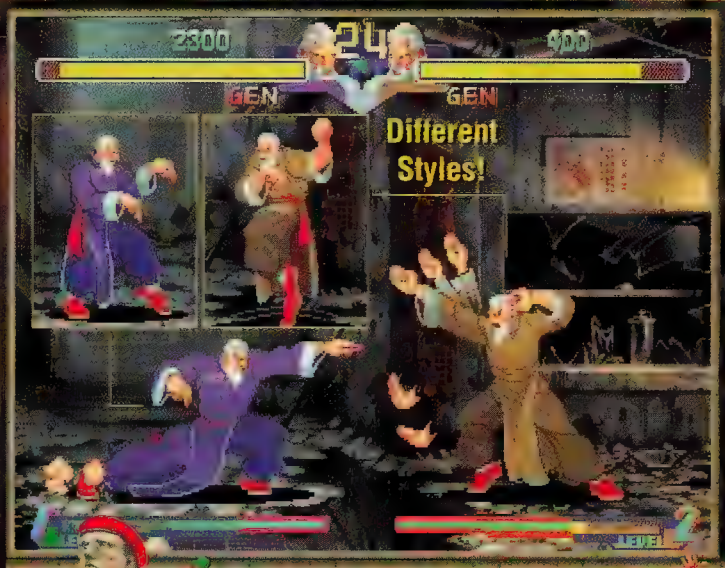
ROSE'S STAGE

SAKURA'S STAGE

SAKURA

Sakura is a 16-year-old Japanese high-school student who once saw Ryu fight and decided that she wanted to be his student, so she mimics his fighting style, with certain moves being better copies than others. She has a super uppercut, fireball and dashing forward kick.



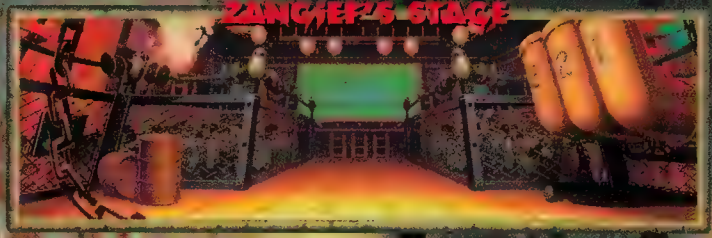


GEN

Gen is easily the most innovative new character in *Street Fighter Alpha 2*. He's actually two characters in one: by pressing three punches or kicks you can choose between his two totally different fighting styles. The styles' regular attacks, supers, alpha counters and moves are totally different. Gen will clearly take much skill to play.

ROLENTO

Rolento is the fourth level boss from *Final Fight*. He has a short staff which he uses as his main weapon, as well as throwing knives and, in his throws and supers, grenades. He plays very much like Vega with numerous off-the-wall attacks.



DHALSIM
Wow! It's Dhalsim. And guess what... he has a new standing short, a new Super Combo air-throw, and a really weird voice. Even when he gets hit, he says "Yoga."
ZANGIEF
It's Zangief. He has a new air throw Super Combo and that's about it. But he does have Mayonnaise Cyclone, and that's the cream.

off-selected character, and if nothing else he is very amusing. (Who else would blow themselves up with a grenade when they lose by time up?)

Rolento, Gen, and Sakura are all 100% good news, but now it's time for me to comment on what (in my OPINION) is the single worst part about *Alpha 2*: the decision to bring back Zangief and Dhalsim. This is a tough one, and there's solid arguments on both sides. On one hand, Zangief and Dhalsim are revised more than any play than almost anyone else in *SFII* (certainly more than Blanka or Honda), and will please those who missed them in *Alpha*. On the other hand, I would RATHER have had "new" characters, meaning anyone who wasn't in the *SFII* games and could offer a completely new gameplay style. The problem is, as they currently (why would Capcom redesign them?), Zangief and Dhalsim play just too much like they did in Super Turbo. Sure, they each have a new Super (both strangely rising air throws), and their animation is awesome. But, in the end, it's still Zangief and Dhalsim. These were two of the least popular characters in *SFII* (other than that loser, T.Hawk). If it were up to me I would have chosen Strider Hiryu, Geki from *SFI*, Eagle from *SFI*, and/or Lynn Kurosawa from *Alien vs. Predator* (I can't tell you how many times I've heard players ask for Geki, he is possibly the most requested character ever!). And if Capcom really was set on a third "grab" type character (isn't two enough?), I would have picked Haggar over Zangief in a split-gathering split second.

By the way, it's patently obvious that the blank spaces in the bottom left and bottom right corners of the test version will be replaced by the usual question mark secret character/random select icon. Our two main predictions/prayers for new hidden characters are Zaki (Guy's master) and Gouken (Ryu, Ken, and Gen's master, supposedly killed by Akuma long ago). Also, we have no information yet on possible new bosses, because the test version gave us a hilarious "Oh No, Location Test Ending!" message.

Let's move on to general gameplay. The biggest difference here is the Custom Combo System, described below. The two second most major enhancements (depending on your position, is that chain combos are, for whatever reason, GONE. I have very mixed emotions about chain combos. On one hand, I don't think they belong in, say, *SFIII*. However, since Capcom put chain combos in *Alpha*, I think it's weird and inconsistent to take them out in *Alpha 2*. However, 99.999% of all Internet *SF* fans hate chain combos, so I will not formally advocate their return in *Alpha 2*, because I am just one opinion and the most important thing is pleasing the majority of the expert players. However, why not make it a soft dip off/free select option like auto-blocking was in *SFA*? Another thing I sorely wish to contest is that certain essential (well, if not essential, at least very entertaining) two-in-ones have been removed, such as Ryu's standing Rowdyhouse. Why, Capcom? In what way did this make Ryu too powerful? Another small but important thing I wish to point out is that in the test version of original *Alpha*, Charlie's low Forward could two-in-one, but it was removed from the final. I really hope Capcom puts this back in for *Alpha 2*. On the good side, certain characters have acquired the two-in-ones they needed (Sagat's standing Rowdyhouse and low Fi[illegible] and Birdie's [illegible] Bash).

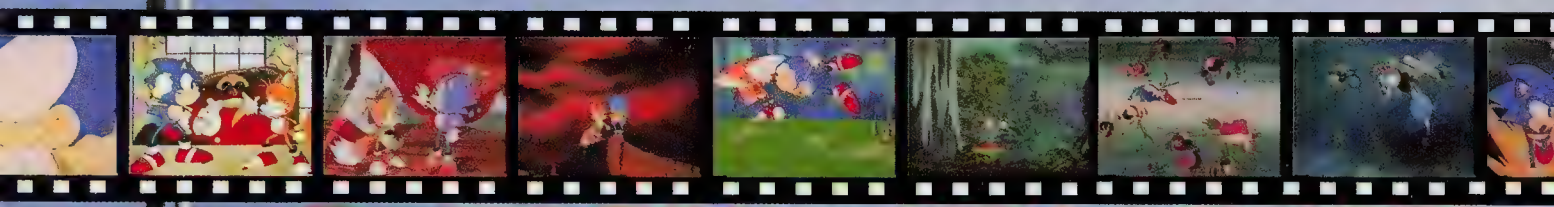
Let's dash through the other gameplay changes. Everyone can now do two Alpha counters (one will punch and one with kick), so that means one new AC for all the old characters (but most are of course reused frames). You can now roll in six directions/distances, depending on the button you press. Some but not all old characters have new moves, but many have been tweaked and balanced: Adon has an air Jaguar Kick, a top-down attack, and his motions are easier to do; Sagat is MUCH faster in all aspects; Birdie has a nerfing Bull Head and new animation for his Bull Revenger; Chun-Li's Kikoken is now a standard fireball motion; Charlie has a leap which allows him to move in while charged for a Sonic Boom or Flash Kick, and his pause after a Sonic Boom is shorter; Guy has a new dashing elbow; Rose has a new charging soul scan attack, but can throw multiple Shinkuu Hadokens and also has a fake Hadoken (although it would be a more effective fake if he actually said "Hadoken" or even "Hado..."); Ken has a fake Tatsu Zankisempukyaku; and Sodom has a fake Tatsumetsu Buster, plus his taunt now hits. (Personally, I think the fakes are lame, but many expert players enjoy them... I can't wait for someone to two-in-one into a fake as the ultimate form of taunting.)

As an overall graphic piece, *Alpha 2* demolishes *Alpha*, despite the fact that 90% of the animation frames for the old characters are unchanged. (Some characters, however, have quite a few new frames, especially Dan who has a redrawn face, redrawn basic moves, and a redrawn first frame for his Dankukyaku.) Every stage just overflows with gorgeous colors, often making you stop to ask what CPS-II really do this game. There are also heavenly new portrait pictures, and some characters have new win poses (including Rose, who has the most amazing win pose ever conceived - it's straight from the *Alpha's World* art). And for the true die-hard fan who notices every detail of every touch, you could watch the game for weeks and still not see it all. Only Capcom thinks of details such as Dhalsim actually disappearing in his status-bar face portrait when he disappears during the game, or including a miniature preview image of the stage during the much improved map screen before each fight. The only even remotely negative comment about the graphics is that the new characters are so well drawn with so many animating frames, that the old characters look just a bit out of place. (And that's saying something, that Capcom could completely redefine its own standard of animation quality in less than a year.)

As for the audio, *Alpha* had wildly luscious music, but *Alpha 2*'s new tracks for the new characters (old characters have the same music with slightly different samples) represent music granted to this world by a higher being. I will not spend a single word trying to convey how much pleasure I derived from Sakura's stage music, it would be a waste of space. One big surprise is that every old character except for Ryu has all-new voices, generally for the better, but in a few cases for the worse. Chun-Li sounds cute now, but her "Kikosho!" used to be greatest sample in the history of samples, and now it's just... not. There are many new sound effects, including a great new dizzy sound.

This is a preview, and of course the game will probably undergo many changes before it is finalized for release (date currently unknown, but I'd predict sometime around late spring). So, despite all the incomplete aspects, I felt comfortable having approached the game in the semi-evaluative manner I did - after all, Capcom wants feedback, so here it is. I'm not sure whether chain combos are in or not, whether there are zero or five hidden characters, I am confident that, when completed, *Street Fighter Alpha 2* will be the greatest fighting game of all time, and one of the top arcade games of '96. With such a great game to occupy us for the next 6-12 months, I am HAPPY to wait as long as it takes for Capcom to make the very best *Street Fighter III* possible. —B. Stabler • Layout by Nick Rox

WE'LL BE BACK WITH MORE *SFA2* NEXT ISSUE!



TAKUHI'S

ANIME FAN

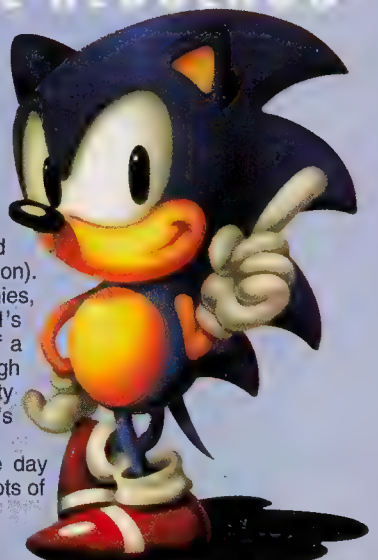
FIGHTING SONIC..?

Sonic has made his Japanese animated debut, to remind us once again how much American cartoons suck. The U.S. Sonic Saturday morning cartoon is long gone (I hope), but it would definitely still be around today if it was as good as its Japanese counterpart. The Japanese Sonic is a rental-only OVA, (the first of hopefully many) so the animation is much cleaner than you could ever expect from a TV show, but the characters' on-screen presence is what makes this Sonic so cool. It's like playing the game, but in anime form. Or something.

Since it's only 27 minutes (part 1 of...?), there's not too much to say about Sonic. Sonic and Tails are out to save the president, who's been kidnapped by arch-villain Dr. Eggman (Robotnik in the US version). So, they run off to Eggworld, fight some minor enemies, fight a boss, meet Knuckles, and then Volume 1's over. It doesn't sound like much, but it's a hell of a trip, and the pace is as fast as Sonic himself. Though Sonic sounds a bit gruff, the voice actors are pretty cool, and the new character, Sarah (the president's daughter), is a nice addition to the cast.

Slim though the possibility is, Sega might one day bring the series here, but until then, enjoy some shots of what a video game-based cartoon should be...

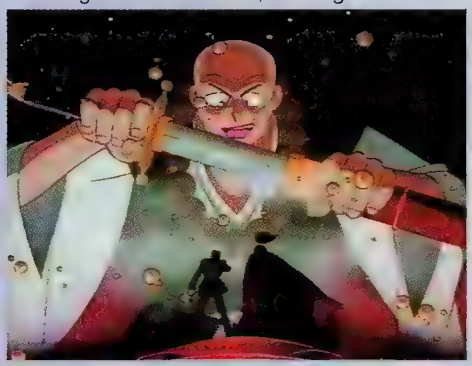
SONIC THE HEDGEHOG

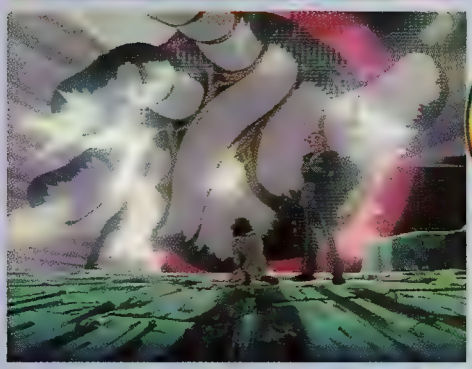


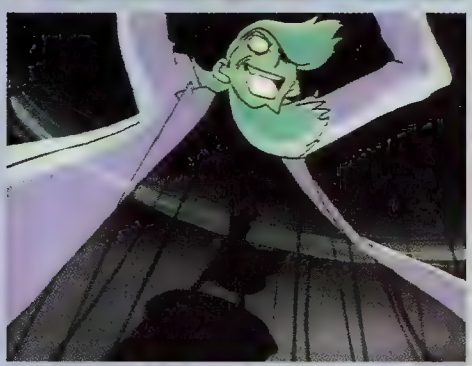
For some reason, the best anime always seems to be based on really, really stupid things. Like last month's *IRIA*, *Giant Robo* is based on low budget action films I'd really rather forget about. But one of the mysterious things about animation is that it can take things that were painfully cheesy as live action, and make them pretty damn cool. *Giant Robo* is the best example of this mysterious force yet.

The Giant Robot that gives the series its name is still the lamest part, but the supporting cast of "Experts of Justice" agents are incredibly awesome, in a "this should be a fighting game" sort of way. The character design (handled expertly by Toshiyuki Kubohka, of Sega-CD *Lunar* fame) and animation are top notch, and the action scenes are very well choreographed.

Storyline: In the near future, a new energy source, called the Shizuma drive, is invented. Totally clean and infinitely recyclable, it quickly becomes a world standard. But, in the possession of its inventors is a drive that can reverse the process, and effectively destroy all existing Shizuma drives, leaving the world totally (bad pun coming) powerless (ha). Luckily, Giant Robo is powered by good 'ol environmentally devastating atomic power, and he's the international community's only chance to stop Big Fire, the evil organization behind this nefarious plot.







The translation has its ups and downs. Most of the characters, like Taisoh and that one incredibly French guy, are still pretty cool, but exchanges like the following (between green-haired commando, Ginrei, and 12-year old Giant Robo operator Daisaku) kind of make you wonder:

Ginrei: You're in love, aren't you. [Giggles] I mean, with the Shizuma drive.

Daisaku: [In complete monotone] Yes, I guess I am. It's fascinating. All the batteries disappeared as I grew up. Shizuma's drive is everywhere. Radios. Cars. Airplanes. The recycling process is what I really enjoy.

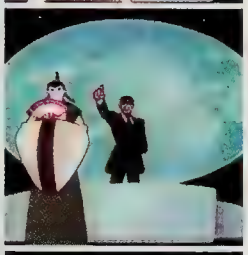
As cool as the rest of the heroes and villains are, I'd really, really like to slap Daisaku.

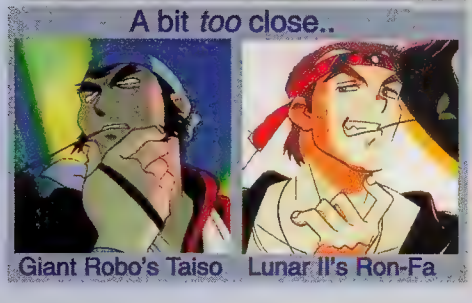
Though the dialogue's a bit heavy on the cheese, *Giant Robo* actually has a very serious storyline, and some genuinely touching moments. Not to mention that each 45-minute episode has about twice as much action as every other tape covered this month combined. Definitely my action pick o' the month.

By Manga Entertainment, volumes 1-4 available now, volume 5 available in March

Dubbed, Volume 1 (2 episodes): $19.95, Volumes 2-5 (1 episode each): $14.95

Okay for most audiences, some graphic violence





Old people. They're boring, they're useless, and let's face it, they're kind of disgusting. This is basically the premise behind Katsuhiro Otomo's newest (well, here, at least) film, *Roujin-Z* (Roujin, meaning old person, pronounced "row," as in, you know, your boat, and "gin," like the drink, unless you're Gene Siskel, in which case it's evidently completely different). If you're expecting *Akira 2*, you're in for a biiiii-ig disappointment, but if you're expecting a dark comedy about our treatment of the elderly, you're definitely in luck.

Yes, back to the old people. There sure are a lot of them, and they're kind of a pain, the way that we young-uns have to take care of them, just because they're (technically) responsible for giving us life. Luckily, a massive corporation (whose name I forgot) has a solution: the Z-001. It's a large, robotic bed that cleans, entertains, and monitors the health of your elders, so you can go eat Cheetohs and watch WWF, or whatever. Mr. Takazawa, a senile old invalid, is picked to test the machine, despite the objections of his student nurse, Haruko.

Unfortunately, Takazawa isn't too thrilled with his Z-001. He prefers the dignity and human kindness he got from Haruko. And since the Z-001 is programmed to respond to the desires of its occupant, it manages to first infiltrate computer networks everywhere in an attempt to contact Haruko, and then becomes mobile to follow her home. The corporation sees this as a theft by Haruko, and has her arrested, but it isn't that simple. The Z-001 is an offshoot of a military hardware program, and, under Takazawa's senile command, becomes a dangerous weapon capable of making his desires a reality... and to hell with anyone who gets in the way.

Though there's a very *Akira*-esque machine vs. machine battle at the end, *Roujin-Z* is actually a dark comedy that both parodies our attitudes about the elderly and subtly tries to make a point about human dignity. Japanese comedies make for pretty tough translations, but US Manga Corps did a surprisingly good job in preserving the satirical tone, and the voice actors (and this is something I don't say too often) actually did pretty good work. Also notable is the soundtrack, which is full of very cool music that I couldn't even begin to describe. Since *Roujin-Z* has received quite a bit of recognition as a theatrical release (and a Siskel & Ebert "pick of the week"), let's hope US Manga Corps considers releasing the soundtrack, too (well, I can *dream*).

By U.S. Manga Corps, available 4/16/96

80 minutes; Subtitled version: $29.95, Dubbed version: 19.95

Rated PG-13

By the creator of *MD Geist* and *Genocyber*, *Cybernetics Guardian* is probably exactly what you expect: cool monster design, a good dose of killing, and a slightly original sci-fi storyline. Our hero is John Stalker, a young man who grew up in the slums of Cyberwood city, an area affectionately known as "Cancer." John disproves the idea that one can never leave Cancer, and joins up with Leyla, a researcher at the Central Guard Company who's charged with the quest of cleaning-up Cancer. She creates a Guard Suit capable of enforcing order within the area, without fear of damage to its pilot.

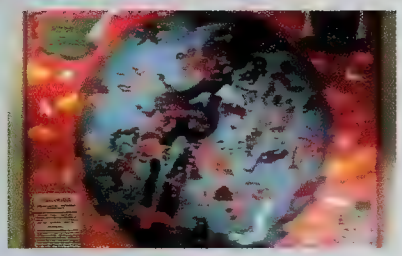
Enter Adler, another researcher who doesn't care much for Leyla's namby-pamby approach. He creates a "Genocyber Killing Machine," and, as you can probably guess, its main function isn't exactly to sign welfare checks. Adler's very fond of his solution, and tries to sabotage Leyla's entry as she unveils it to the world, and kill its pilot... John. I don't want to spoil what happens next, but rest assured, it's something bad. And thus, the killing ensues.

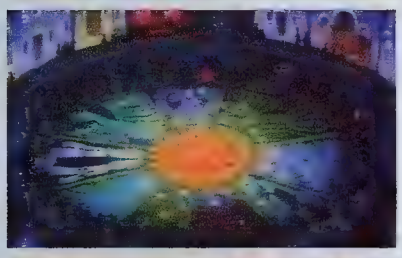
CyGuard has some excellent scenes, a few neat twists, and a physically painful glam metal soundtrack. You've probably seen all of its constituent elements before, but that doesn't make it not worth watching. It's the type of thing you watch with a pizza, a friend, and the intent to just vegetate for a while.

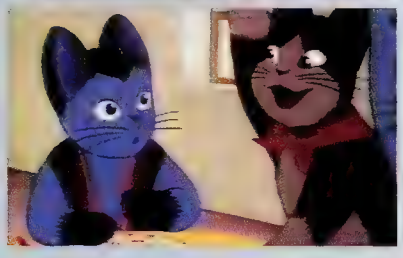
By US Manga Corps, available now

45 minutes, subtitled

Parental discretion advised (for graphic violence)







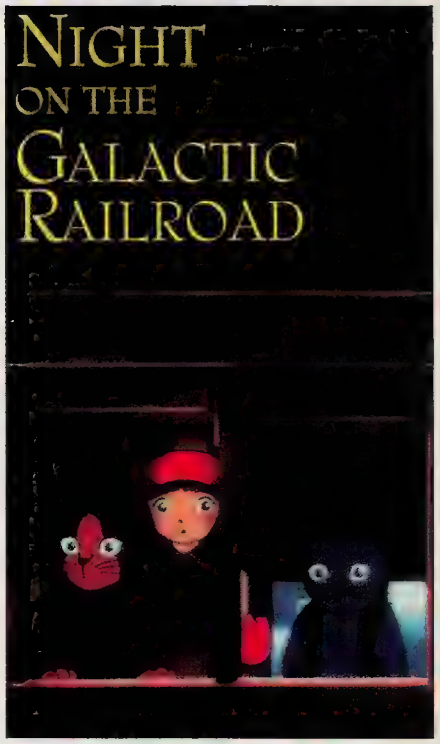
Once a year or so, an animated film comes out in Japan that's supposed to, I don't know, soothe the dormant guilt that most anime producers must have from producing a non-stop string of sex & violence films, or something. You can always spot these films a mile away; they're the ones that are sponsored by huge financial institutions and based on stories that were written long before you were born. They're also almost always excellent.

Night on the Galactic Railway is one such film. Originally released in Japanese theaters 10 years ago, and based on a story written in 1927, it's not exactly going to catch the eyes of, say, the *Dominion Tank Police* set. But if you give it a chance, you just might like what you find.

To be honest, it's one of the slowest movies I've ever seen. I spent the first 30 minutes or so grabbing my TV and screaming "CAN'T YOU WALK ANY FASTER!?" at main character Giovanni, who spends the first 30 minutes slowly sauntering about town. But in time, I found myself becoming entranced by *Night*'s dream-like mood. Although a film about fuzzy cats with Italian names riding a train through the cosmos sounds pretty juvenile, literally ever scene has a palpably eerie, vaguely disturbing tone. It really is just like a dream, the kind where nothing really scary's happening, but you're always on edge 'cause you don't yet understand the rules of the dream's reality. The eerie soundtrack and the quality animation coupled with the blueness of everything (I don't even want to think about how many tanker trucks full of blue paint it took to make this) only compound this feeling. In an odd sort of way, it reminded me a lot of the computer game, Gadget.

Though it's light on action, *Night* is incredibly well written and its calm yet spooky pace is definitely something to experience. Not exactly what you'd expect from Gisaburo Sugii (the director of the *Street Fighter II* anime, believe it or not), but if you can overlook the slow pace, this is something that's definitely worth a chance.

By Central Park Media, available 4/2/96
115 minutes, subtitled, $29.95
Fine for all audiences



Other highlights:
Guyver (left), is considered by many to be one of the mech classics, when it was released by someone or other a few years ago. Now, Manga Entertainment has slapped a fresh coat of paint on it and is re-releasing all 12 episodes with new dubbing, new music, and some incredible new cover art. The first episode hit stores on February 27th, and new ones are being released every 3 weeks.

Also coming at the end of February is A.D. Vision's *Gunsmith Cats* (middle), Vol. 1, available dubbed or subtitled, on tape or laserdisc. It's the new one by Kenichi Sonada (who brought us *Bubblegum Crisis* and *Riding Bean*, and that's a pretty darn good resume...), and its already available here as a Dark Horse comic. A.D. Vision is also releasing a special edition tape with an extra 40-minute "making of" bit.

Manga Entertainment's *Bounty Dog* (right) is a 45 minute OVA about private investigators mixed up in an eons-old alien affair on our newly colonized moon. Look for it March 19th.

Clearly, you've got plenty to keep you busy... See you next month!

Welcome to Other Stuff. On with the show.

A problem Sam Tramiel wishes he had!

As we all know, Nintendo has delayed their 64-bit system yet again. From what we hear, there are two reasons for this: Reason #1 is what Nintendo considers a supply and demand "problem." You see, Nintendo has just now discovered that many hungry consumers out there are just itching to buy the N64. How many consumers? An estimated 3.1 million gamers will buy an N64 by the end of 1996 in Japan alone, according to Nintendo. Currently, only around 220,000 N64's have been manufactured to date and (surprise) this isn't enough units to supply both Japan and North America in April. Nintendo apparently wants to avoid repeating the supply fiasco of 1991 when they released the 16-bit Super Famicom (SNES) in Japan. At the Super Famicom's release date, Nintendo sold their entire allotment (around 350,000 units) within hours. Demand was so high, greedy retailers charged top dollar for the units, costing Nintendo jillions of yen. Had more units been available, that gouge money would have gone directly to Nintendo. This time around, Nintendo wants to provide ample supply for the Japanese market, and to do that, they sacrificed the April '96 North American release date. That's all fine and dandy, but we now hear the N64 is going to be delayed YET AGAIN, only this time in Japan, which brings us to reason #2... *Mario 64*... From what we hear, *M64* won't be ready in time for the April 21 release date. Officially, the 4/21/96 release date still stands... but uhh... don't be surprised if that slips to, say, Sunday June 2nd, 1996. Nintendo is rumored to be "allowing" a 4,000 Yen ($40.00) deposit on April 21st, so Japanese gamers can reserve their N64 in advance... no comment...

Nintendo's E3 lineup

NOA is currently gearing up for the rapidly approaching E3 Show in LA. N64 games on display include: *Killer Instinct 64*, *Super Mario 64*, *PilotWings 64*, *Wave Race 64*, *Cruis'n USA*, *Doom*, *FIFA Soccer*, *Super Mario Kart R*, *Goldeneye*, *Shadows of the Empire*, *Buggy Boogie*, *Body Harvest*, *Blast Dozer* and an unknown puzzle game by Nintendo. For the SNES, *Donkey Kong Country 3*, *FX Skiing*, *Ken Griffey Junior*, *KI 2*, and *Kirby Deluxe* are all possible candidates. We also hear that Capcom will be showing a 40 meg version of *Street Fighter Alpha* for the SNES.

One more for the road

In a recent round table with GF staff (DH and JP), Howard Lincoln, President of Nintendo of America, hinted towards a few upcoming N64 titles. He said that *Kid Icarus 64* (joy) and *Metroid 64* (big joy) will both be available for N64 (when, he didn't specify) and that Rare is working on a Bulky Drive action game, due out in late 1997. Williams also has more N64 games down the pipeline. *War Gods*, the upcoming 3-D coin-op fighter is one candidate, *Cruis'n The World* (sequel to *Cruis'n USA*) is another. Other N64 titles to watch out for include: *Ultra Mortal Kombat*, *Robotron 3-D*, and also an unnamed off-road driving game. Konami is rumored to be showing a golf game and a soccer game for the N64 at the 1996 Shoshinkai show in August... how depressing. Where's *Castlevania* and *Contra* Konami... Sports?

The 801 lb. gorilla [illegible] shadows

Matsushita's (gesundheit) 64-bit M2 console inches closer to reality. The Japanese release date is being hinted as "a fall 1996 launch" and America is expected to receive the M2 sometime in early '97 or perhaps as soon as late '96. In hardware news, the M2 is now said to include a whopping 8 megabytes of RAM and utilize a quad speed CD drive. The damn-is-this-thing-expensive-to-manufacture unit will retail at $299 with a pack-in game included... In the meantime, Matsushita has just scored a major coup by officially signing on Konami of Japan as a developer. Konami is hard at work on a 3-D fighting game which will debut first on an arcade M2 board, late in 1996, and then on the home console at a later date. Perhaps even more significant is that Capcom is also rumored to be an M2 developer. We don't know exactly what game(s) Capcom plans to release on the M2, but considering the major-league roll Capcom is on lately (*SFA*, *SFA 2*, *D&D 2*, *Marvel Super Heroes*, and *Night Warriors*, to name a few) how bad could it be? Think about it... With those two major developers in their back pockets, "the company with too much money" now has Square and Enix in their cross-hairs. Hearing news that there may be trouble in Nintendo paradise, Matsushita is rumored to be tripping over themselves, scrambling to shove as much cash as possible into the faces of Square and Enix, trying to convince them that the water is much warmer in M2 land.

Sega's DVD Saturn Set For 1997

Insiders at Sega have confirmed that they are working on a 64-bit machine which is Saturn based and will incorporate DVD technology. Not many details are known about the project, but we are inclined to believe that the console in question will be based on Matsushita's M2 chipset. Sega has made a huge investment of time, money and company pride on the Saturn and they are making certain that this 64-bit project is backwards compatible with their current hardware. Matsushita shares Sega's philosophy of backwards compatibility and are guaranteeing that the M2 will work on the 32-bit 3DO as well. One then, has to wonder how Sega and Matsushita are going to pull off: A) designing an M2 chipset that will not only play Saturn and M2 games, but also accelerate a Saturn up to full M2 status, B) not further confusing the loyal Sega consumer by offering them a game system that could potentially play up to FIVE different formats (32-bit Saturn games, 32-bit 3DO games, 64-bit M2 CD games, 64-bit M2 DVD games AND DVD movies... oy!), and C) designing the Einstein of operating systems - one that can quickly and efficiently identify and differentiate 5 different formats on the fly... a daunting task. The one saving grace of this whole deal is that we're talking about Sega and Matsushita here. Individually, these two companies can make the impossible a reality. Together, Sega and Matsushita could make history. As we said before in OS, Sega is not only working on this project, but others as well. And Matsushita? If their dream team consisted of Capcom, Konami, Enix, Square, and (gulp) Sega, all in one neat M2 package, they could be a force to be reckoned with... to say the least.

Sony's mascot finally a reality?

Last month in OS we mentioned an action game for the Play Station developed by Naughty Dog. The name has been changed from *Willy Wombat* to *Crash Bandicoot*. Sony Computer Entertainment recently obtained the rights to *Crash Bandicoot* from Universal Interactive, and is now considering *CB* as a potential PSX mascot. As we said before, the *CB* project is being programmed by Naughty Dog and headed up by Producer/Director David Siller, creator of *Aero the Acrobat* parts 1 & 2. *Crash Bandicoot* is a *Mario 64*-ish 3-D action game and is scheduled to be released in October.

Slimy Stuff

David Perry and co. have uttered a few details concerning their latest title: *MDK: Murder, Death, Kill*. Due out later this year, *MDK* is set to debut on the PC. *MDK* is a 3-D sci-fi action/shooting game and is said to be ultra-violent. Complex 3-D environments and a dark, evil, futuristic mood separate *MDK* from the rest of the next-generation pack. A PlayStation version is on tap for a '97 release and an M2 version is also a possibility. But what's this about pizza?

[illegible] unemployed?

I doubt it, but rumors are circulating in Japan of a supposed replacement. That's right, the little hedgehog responsible for putting Sega on top (with a little help from Tom of course) could be replaced. So what is this mystery game based on? All we can figure is that Sega may have their sights on a tad older user for their 32-bit system and upcoming (and inevitable) 64. That is, if the rumor's true. Regardless, Sonic is on a roll once again with three games currently in development: *Fighting Sonic*, an STI-developed 3-D Sonic, and a yet-unseen SOJ Sonic. We'll keep you posted...

PLAYSTATION CHIEF EXITS

After only four months as president of Sony Computer Inter-tainment, Marty Homlish is leaving that post to return to Sony Electronics. Sony Computer Entertainment is Sony's marketing and distribution arm for the 32-bit PlayStation.

Homlish, who ascended to the president's position in October (taking over the position from Olaf Olaffson who in turn snatched the job away from Steve Race), will be involved in two new business ventures at Sony Electronics. A company spokesman said he (Homlish) left SCE because he wanted to continue living on the East coast, rather than relocating to the northern California community of Foster City, where the PlayStation division is headquartered.

Shigeo Maruyama will succeed Homlish at Sony Computer Entertainment. Maruyama is currently serving as vice president of Sony Computer Entertainment Japan.

ATARI CORP. LAUNCHES NEW DIVISION FOR PC MARKET

Atari Corp. is launching a new division to make and distribute game software for personal computers which are estimated to be in 10 million US homes.

The new unit, called Atari Interactive, will tap into its library of game titles and adapt them to run on today's high-powered PC models. Atari will update games, which include *Pac Man* and *Asteroids*, with three-dimensional graphics and stereo sound.

KONAMI & MEI JOINTLY DEVELOP MOTHERBOARD FOR ARCADE MACHINES

Konami Co. Ltd. and Matsushita Electric Industrial Co., will jointly develop a new 64-bit mother board for video game machines used in amusement arcades. The motherboard will be released with Konami-related game software by the end of 1996. Konami plans to adopt Matsushita's 64-bit M2 system to develop action video game software using three-dimensional computer graphics. The price of the motherboard will be under $2,000. Konami will supply 5,000-10,000 boards for each software title to amusement arcades worldwide. Konami expects total annual profits to expand $20 million or more as a result of the new product. Although Konami also develops motherboards, it decided to use Matsushita's M2 motherboard for 3-D computer graphics to cut development costs. Matsushita has already announced a plan to apply 64-bit graphic processing technology in a wide number of areas, including arcade games and personal computers.

GOLDSTAR HALTS 3DO PRODUCTION

LG Goldstar Corporation has made the decision to discontinue manufacture of the US version of its 32-bit 3DO game console. The company has sufficient inventories relative to its foreseeable product life cycle and will continue to support current systems in the US market. Goldstar is also expected to support the 3DO business in Europe, Korea, and the rest of the world (South America, Africa, China). When asked if Goldstar would consider licensing the 64-bit M2, company officials stated, "Goldstar is still in negotiations with Matsushita regarding the M2 technology..."

ACCLAIM ENTERS COIN-OP MARKET

Acclaim Entertainment, Inc. announced that an arcade version of *Batman Forever* will be hitting arcades soon. This is the company's first venture into the coin-op market and will also be the debut of their proprietary RAX audio technology. RAX audio technology is a high-fidelity, low data-rate software compression technology that allows programmers to include virtually any sound or soundtrack without translating or reprogramming and can play up to 12 random audio tracks simultaneously. Acclaim describes the game as "a one or two-player fighting game in which players may select either Batman or Robin as they venture through the Gotham City's underworld in an attempt to prevent Two-Face and the Riddler from taking over the city." Look for the game in an arcade near you in March.

UBI SOFT OFFERS *RAYMAN* DEMO DISC

Ubi Soft Entertainment is offering Saturn and PlayStation owners the opportunity to "try before they buy." A preview CD of *Rayman,* which includes a playable version of the first world of the game, will be available for $5.95. Also included is a $5 rebate coupon for those who decide to purchase the complete game. The decision to create the demo disk was made due to the overwhelming number of requests on Ubi Soft's web site (http://www.ubisoft.com) for downloadable demos. Demo disks are common practice in the PC market and Ubi Soft's Carrie Tice feels that "this is a logical step for these Next Generation systems.

NINTENDO URGES TRADE ACTION TO END VIDEO GAME PIRACY.

Nintendo of America Inc. urged U.S. Trade Representative Mickey Kantor to take action against China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, and 4 Latin American countries that have failed to end the rampant counterfeiting of Nintendo video game products. Nintendo estimated it lost more than $1.3 billion in sales to piracy in 1995 alone.

More than 75 U.S. companies that create, license and sell Nintendo game products joined Nintendo in making the recommendations filed under the trademarks and other intellectual property.

Nintendo and its publishers have waged an aggressive campaign against video game counterfeiting for more than a decade. They have worked with the U.S. Customs Service and with customs officials and law enforcement authorities in Western Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, and Asia to combat counterfeiting. Nintendo also has brought legal actions against hundreds of video game counterfeiters in more than 30 countries. This latest action marks Nintendo's long-term dedication towards halting the illegal sales of counterfeited games.

EARTHWORM JIM
GROOVY GIVEAWAY WINNERS

Congratulations to all the winners of the Earthworm Jim Groovy Giveaway Contest. All the art was incredible and we appreciate all the entries. Wish we had more room to show them all!

GRAND PRIZE WINNER!

It was a tough call, but Jennifer Seng of Westborough, Massachusetts, with her Udderly-infested SD Barney collage, walked away with the grand prize of an original EWJ animation cell from the EWJ cartoon series.

1ST PRIZE WINNERS!

Congratulations to these lucky three, who go home with a low numbered EWJ action figure set.

Phil Bailey of Paterson, New Jersey and his "Handbag from Heck" housewife.

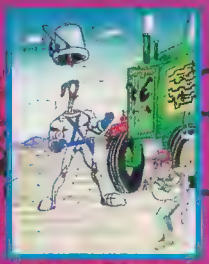
Damien Payne of Hampton, Virginia opened up one scary can of worms.

Jon Allegrezza of Winter Park, Florida and a frighteningly realistic view of the video game corporate world.

2ND PRIZE WINNERS!

Our 10 second prize winners get a Earthworm Jim handheld cartridge for Game Gear or Game Boy.

Aaron Phelps
Chico, CA



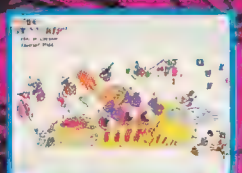
John Slack
Crozet, VA

Carl Johnson
Westwego, LA

Addison Yip
San Francisco, CA

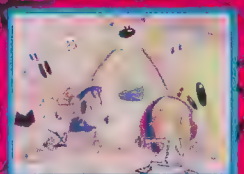
Paul Beck
Florissant, MO

Christine Chugon
Poway, CA



Dale Stearns
Dorsey, IL

Jose Escalante
Pacoima, CA



Raymond Arroyos
El Paso, TX

Hong Li
Brooklyn, NY

3RD PRIZE WINNERS!

Congratulations to our 3rd prize winners, all 10 of whom win a year's subscription to the best magazine on the planet, GameFan!

Doran Johnson
Westwego, LA

Sean Anderson
Brighton, Ontario, Canada

Erik Rodriguez
West Palm Beach, FL

The unknown
Howard Stern Fan.
Call us!

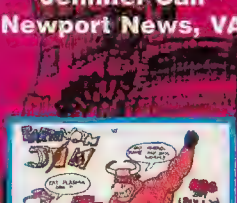
James Coats
Mansfield, Ohio

Erik Steele
Clinton twp, MI

Ken Abrahamsen
Palenville, NY

Jennifer Call
Newport News, VA

Anthony Yepes
Waterbury, CT



Justin Erickson
Grimsby, Ontario, Canada

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GREATEST HEAVYWGT	29.95/12.00
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NBA LIVE '96	34.95.14.00
NEW HORIZONS	49.95/25.00
NFL Q-BACK CLUB '96	29.95.13.00
NHL HOCKEY '96	29.95.12.00
OOZE	34.95.14.00
OPERATION EUROPE	44.95/20.00
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PGA TOLR GOLF '96	49.95/25.00
PHANTASY STAR I	39.95.15.00
PHANTASY STAR I	34.95.14.00
PHANTASY STAR IV	49.95/25.00
PITFALL MAYAN ADV	34.95/15.00
POWER RANGERS	34.95.15.00
POWER RANGER MOVIE	39.95/20.00
PRIMA_ RAGE	29.95.12.00
PRIMETIME NFL F'B	29.95/12.00
ROAD RASH 2	34.95.14.00
ROAD RASH 3	44.95/22.00
SAM_RAI SHODOWN	29.95/12.00
SAT SLAM MASTERS	29.95/12.00
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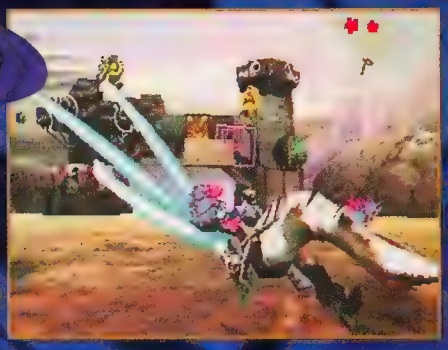

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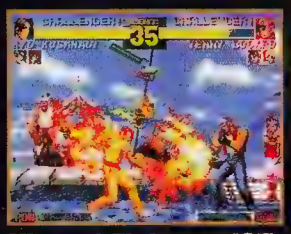

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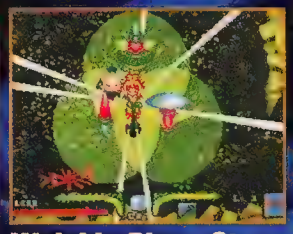

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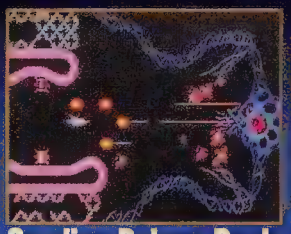

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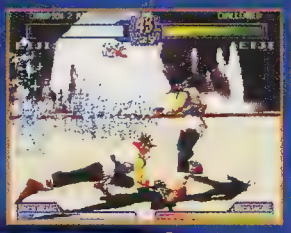

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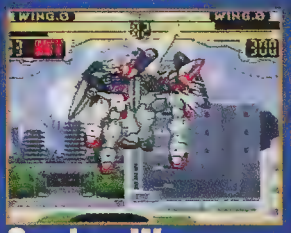

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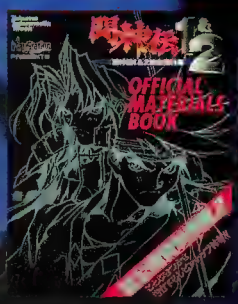

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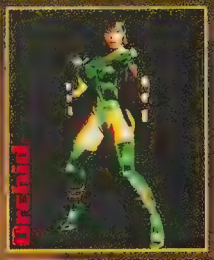

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